CHALLENGES IN ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC HIGHER

EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES IN

THE 21ST CENTURY: A CASE STUDY OF LIBERIA AND SIERRA

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Doctor of Education

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Abstract

CHALLENGES IN ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC HIGHER
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21ST CENTURY: A CASE STUDY OF LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE

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Liberia and Sierra Leone experienced over ten years (1990-2003) of civil wars concurrently which affected the socio-economic, political, and educational frameworks underpinning the institutional structures of these nations. Liberia and Sierra Leone are neighboring nations in West Africa that share deep-rooted socio-cultural and linguistic affiliations. Literature on the effects of wars on these countries' education systems is abundant in primary and secondary institutions, but generally sparsely deals with higher education. There is a noticeable scarcity of scholarly research focusing on tertiary institutions in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, especially of education governance.

This qualitative study examined administrative challenges encountered by institutional leaders and policymakers in managing public higher education institutions in post-conflict societies of Liberia and Sierra Leone—both during and following periods of conflict. Twenty participants were purposively selected from the University of Liberia and W. V. S. Tubman University in Liberia, and the University of Sierra Leone, and Njala University in Sierra Leone. These cohorts were interviewed on location, using interview protocols particularly designed for the study approved by UNICAF Research Ethics Committee (UREC). This method was appropriate for the study because it enabled the researcher to purposefully select participants germane to the study. Informed consent approval was obtained by each participant prior to the interviews in accordance with UREC protocols. The data were thematically coded and analyzed, and the findings interpreted.

The results showed differences in approaches dealing with policy issues, conflict resolution, quality assurance, and traumatic behavior. Other challenges of inadequate financing, damaged infrastructure, and brain drain were similar. Though Liberia and Sierra Leone shared similar problems in higher education administration caused by their respective civil wars, both countries developed different ways to address the same problems. Consequently, the results of these different approaches have implications for the control and supervision of public higher education institutions in post-conflict settings. The long-term impacts of wars on teaching and learning, retention, and the overall quality of education provide avenues for further study.

Keywords: Public Higher Education Institutions, Civil Conflicts, Post-Conflict Countries, Emergency Education, Challenges, Leadership.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by me and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work is entirely my own.

AI Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have not used any AI tools to create, proofread or produce any text or ideas related to any draft or final versions of the thesis.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my husband and children for their support and encouragement.

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To God be all the Glory!

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List of Abbreviations

ADEA   Association of the Development of Education in Africa

ASUU   Academic Staff Union of Universities

AU   African Union

DHS   Demography and Health Survey

ECOWAS   Economic Community of West African States

ETCS   European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

EU   European Union

GC   Governance Commission

GDP   Gross Domestic Product

GETFUND   Ghana Education Trust Fund

GIMPA   Ghana Institute of Public Administration

GTEC   Ghana Tertiary Education Commission

HEIS   Higher Education Institutions

LIES   Liberia Education Sector Analysis

MDG   Millennium Development Goals

MOE   Ministry of Education

MTHE   Ministry of Technical and Higher Education

NAB   National Accreditation Board

NCHE   National Commission on Higher Education

NERDC   National Education Research and Development Council

OECD   Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PHEIS   Public Higher Education Institutions

RUFORUM   Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture

SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TDEL	Trustees for Donation of Education in Liberia
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TETFUND	Tertiary Education Trust Fund
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the study and discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, the research aims and objectives, nature and significance of the study, and the research questions. Education is considered a vehicle for professional growth and development and access to economic and social opportunities worldwide. It plays a pivotal role in transforming societies by changing people's views and perceptions. Education develops human aptitudes, creates capabilities, removes barriers, and broadens opportunities for progress and development. Education produces useful citizens for a more productive society (Genelza, 2022). In this context, higher education institutions (HEIs) are pivotal to fostering a country's long-term growth (Kräusche & Pilz, 2018). According to Frandoloso and Rebelatto (2019), HEIs plays an intrinsic part in changing communities, educating people who believe in sustainable development goals, and adopting constructive activities. Similarly, many countries use education to develop human capital because the extent of human capital development determines the overall advancement of society. Human capital refers to the accumulation of skills, knowledge, and experience possessed by an individual, which contributes to the value and productivity of an organization or society. Similarly, African higher education institutions are expected to develop the human capital necessary to drive growth and development.

Developing human capital means equipping individuals with educational qualifications, skills, and experience. According to Kenton (2022) human capital is an intangible asset like education, training, skills, intelligence, health (mental and physical) and other valuables of creativity, personal resilience, loyalty and punctuality which are unquantifiable. The more investment an organization or country makes in human capital development the more they are likely to increase productivity and attain success. Recognizing the intrinsic link between human

capital development and economic growth, some governments prioritize investment in education as a strategic development tool. This posits that the more educated a population is, the higher the wages they earn, and their spending power is increased. Human capital is traceable to economist Adam Smith (1776) who theorized that developing human capital will lead to productivity and the wealth of a nation. Other more recent economists, like Theodore Schultz, (1960) who first used the term, suggested that human capital, like any other capital, necessary for production, would require education and training for increased productivity.

Training institutions, like institutions of higher learning, are relied on to fulfill this mission through knowledge and skills transfer, capacity building, research and the values individuals contribute to their countries. The World Bank (2022) defines human capital as the combination of knowledge, skills, and health acquired by individuals throughout their lives, which enables them to participate productively and meaningfully in society. The higher the level of educational attainment an individual has evidenced more skills and knowledge to drive development and economic transformation (Sulaiman et al, 2020). Leaders recognize the enormous responsibilities repose on higher education institutions to produce leaders, philosophers, technocrats, managers, and planners, for national development. Unfortunately, Africa's human capital base is reflected in high illiteracy rates, and inadequate support for training and skill development which render higher education institutions incapacitated (World Bank Human Capital Index, 2020). Factors responsible for low capital development in African Countries are access to higher education, inadequate training, underfunding and poor educational policies.

The allocation of education resources demands economic decision-making because economic considerations are important in determining the decisions of education suppliers, institutions, and students because human beings are central to any development efforts.

Karambakuwa, Nadi and Phiri (2019) pointed out that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank are stressing the need for human capital development for sustainable growth in South-Saharan African Countries. Human capital is a result of learning which stays with the person noticeable in his skills and productivity, so individuals and society benefit from investment in people. Therefore, the most serious challenges faced by African governments is how to invest in education for development. African higher education institutions need to be fully supported to meet the demands of societies. Consequently, human capital development has implications for effective training, learning and administration.

However, with technological advancements and innovations in knowledge and skills transfer, African universities lag because of underdevelopment, lack of funding, limited access to equal educational opportunities and high student expectations. These challenges are further compounded by long years of violent conflicts, in some African countries, which impair the quality of higher education and the education delivery system. In some instances, violent conflicts lead to brain drains, poor management, and the employment of inadequately prepared administrators, faculty, and staff.

According to Pee and Vululleh (2020) higher education institutions (HEIs) are to produce human capital equipped with knowledge and skills necessary for job markets and increase a country's ability to for economic, social and political development. Consequently, countries must create and produce modern technologies to meet their national needs, a task that devolves on universities. This is because training in science, technology and education has the propensity to lead to improvement in the quality of life, innovation, social and economic development. Technology is responsible for increasing enrolment, flexibility in classrooms and communication which encourages students. According to recent statistics in education showed African Universities

have been experiencing incremental growth in student enrollment with a corresponding decline in funding. For example, according to Fredua-Kwanteng and Osofu (2018) enrollment in African universities increased from three point five million students to nine point four million students between the period 1999 to 2012. This represents an exponential increase of 170%. Darvas, Gao and Shen (2017) asserted average annual growth rate in enrolment in African higher education of learning is 15%. Notwithstanding, these enrollments are beyond the capacities that can be adequately accommodated for quality education delivery. High growth rate in student enrollment negatively affects the educational institution's ability to deliver quality instruction and provide student services and physical facilities (Fredua-Kwanteng & Osofu, 2018). Added to these problems are conflicts in African countries which also affect higher education governance and performance. Sub-Saharan Africa has been flawed with several conflicts in the last two decades (World Bank, 2022).

According to Fang et al. (2020) the West African region remains susceptible to conflicts with about 30% of these countries affected in 2019. Though conflicts continue in several African countries, some are emerging from violent conflicts to development. In the Sub-Saharan region, Liberia and Sierra Leone are countries which were plagued simultaneously with over ten years of civil wars which have had relative peace for over 20 years and are in stages of recovery and development. The extent to which these violent conflicts affected administrative challenges of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which are emerging from violent civil conflicts, is the focus of this study.

Background of Study

Liberia and Sierra Leone are neighboring West African countries with shared histories, languages, cultures, and experiences. Both countries experienced disturbances of prolonged

periods of civil wars, Ebola and Coronavirus Disease, crises that adversely affected their economic growth and development. The Ebola outbreak in the West African countries of Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone between 2013 and 2016 is recorded as the worse pandemic in the history of the virus since it's discovery with over 28,600 cases reported (Fall, 2019). The World Health Organization (2014) stipulated that the epidemic was an international public health emergency that claimed over 15,000 lives through its ability for rapid transmission. The pandemic affected the already weak healthcare delivery systems in these countries as well as other social services.

Higher institutions of learning were constrained to close for unspecified periods of time to prevent the spread of the virus. A few years after the Ebola outbreak in Liberia and Sierra Leone, these countries faced a new pandemic of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) which also affected higher education. The effect of the pandemics after years of civil wars further disrupted higher education activities. During Ebola, most higher education institutions were forced to close due the rapid transmission of the deadly disease. However, in the case of the coronavirus disease, higher education institutions adopted digital learning platforms to keep schools open during the pandemic. Despite the losses in classroom-operated situations, opportunities were sought to address continuous education during the pandemic. Teaching and learning were carried out online, forcing faculty and students to transition to online learning platforms. The coronavirus pandemic affected more than teaching and learning by adding stress and problems associated with concentration since online learning was accompanied by technology, instructional challenges and isolation.

The economic effects of the pandemic differ from the sociological effects. Togetherness and social gatherings were made weak by the do not touch policies sue to the high transmission of the disease. The stigma and risk associated with the Ebola virus disease caused schools to shut down which affected millions of students. However, the pandemic did not affect economic growth

and development, indicating that the pandemic had minimal effects on economic growth. Sierra Leone and Liberia continue to experience steady growth rates in gross domestic product (GDP) despite the pandemic.

Figure 1

GDP Growth Rates of Liberia and Sierra Leone and Confirmed Cases of Ebola
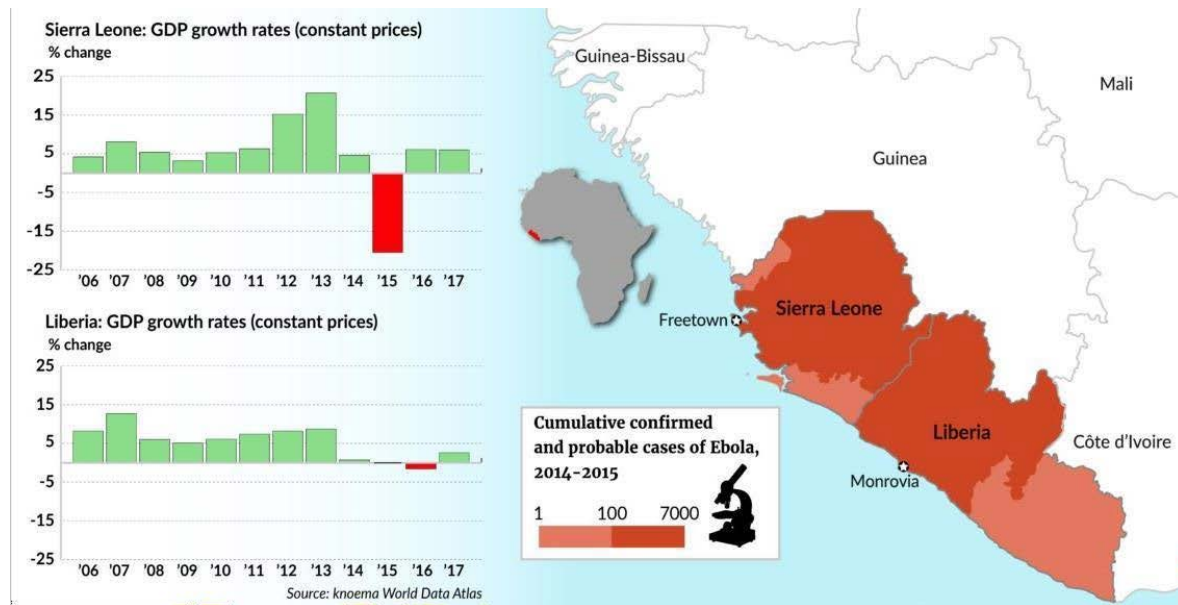
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The long nature of the civil crises and the proximity of these countries resulted to experiences of high influx of refugees, internal population displacement, economic stagnation, and prolonged periods of closures of universities and all post-secondary institutions.

Liberia and Sierra Leone have youthful populations. Over 60% of the population of Liberia and Sierra Leone is below age of 35 (World Factbook, 2018). The population of Liberia is projected at 5.180,208 million as of 2022, with over 65 % below age 35 (World Bank, 2022). In 2021, the population of Sierra Leone was projected at 8,312,332 with 42 % under 15 years old and 19% between the ages of 15-24 years old (United Nations Population Fund, 2022). The 2019 National

Demography and Health Survey, (DHS, 2019) showed 39% of females and 29% of males in Sierra Leone have no education. 31% of females and 32% of males aged 6 years or older have attended some primary school; however, only 4% of females and 3% of males have completed primary education. The DHS (2019) put the median number of years of schooling as 1.2 for women and 2.8 for men. The youthful population in Liberia and Sierra Leone has implications for higher education. For example, approximately 8.1 percent of the Liberian population has accessed university-level education. According to the Liberia Education Sector Analysis (LIES, 2016), only 10.8% of men and 4.6% of women in the Liberian population have attained tertiary education, highlighting a significant gender disparity in higher educational attainment. The number of students seeking enrollment in tertiary education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone is spiraling. In Sierra Leone, data from the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education, (MTHE, 2020) indicated an increase in enrolment for tertiary education of 44% between 2017 and 2019. At the University of Liberia, enrollment for the same period was 50% (University of Liberia Website, 2022).

All educational activities were stopped, and facilities were devastated during the periods of civil war which lasted between ten to thirteen years, in Sierra Leone and Liberia, respectively. International non-governmental organizations attempted to fill the educational void created by the wars by providing emergency or accelerated education at the primary and secondary levels. Accelerated learning programs are complementary educational programs focused on completing learning in a shorter period compared to regular schools scheduling (Boisvert et al., 2017).

Accelerated learning is a multi-faceted method of learning where the students control the speed and method of instruction. Though accelerated learning programs can be applied to tertiary education, in Liberia and Sierra Leone they were restricted to youths of primary and secondary

school age because priority was placed on younger children. These short-term interventions were planned and administered outside of prescribed national educational curricula. Boisvert et al. (2017) affirmed that accelerated learning programs are for children and young people whose education were interrupted by wars and is intended to provide basic education to enable children and youths return to formal education or switch to work. The international non-governmental organizations placed emphasis on overage children and technical and vocational education for youths deprived of education during the civil wars who demonstrated skills for experiential learning.

The accelerated learning program is designed to cut instructional time, speed up the development process for students to learn more in less time (Schornack, 2016). Higher education was less important though it was recognized that there was a need for reform and appropriate leadership (Governance Commission, 2015). According to Smith (2014) refugees and internally displaced people have difficulties accessing education and conflict affected countries have some of the largest gender inequalities and lowest literacy rates in the world.

Liberia and Sierra Leone have two of the oldest public higher education institutions in West Africa. The oldest Government-established university in West Africa, Fourah Bay College, founded in 1827, is in Sierra Leone (University of Sierra Leone, 2022). The second oldest public university in West Africa, the University of Liberia, was established in 1861 as Liberia College and later changed to a full university in 1962 (University of Liberia, 2019). Since then, both Liberia and Sierra Leone have established other public higher education institutions. Currently, post-war statistics show Sierra Leone has three public universities, two public polytechnics, and two public teachers' training colleges. Liberia has four public universities and seven public community colleges (NCHE, 2022).

World Bank Saber Country Report (2017), showed that student enrollment in public universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone is increasing while funding per student has decreased due to lack of governmental support, making it difficult to deliver quality education and manage the institutions effectively. The Global Monitoring Report (2011) indicated that education is not significant in crisis situations though children, teachers and institutions are in the first line of attack. Equally challenging to tertiary education in post-conflict societies, is the quality of instructors which has a direct bearing on the quality of students (Gbollie and David, 2014). This is further compounded by damaged educational infrastructure, buildings, and laboratories (World Bank Saber Country Report, 2017).

To address these problems, Liberia and Sierra Leone developed new strategies for the effectiveness of the education sector particularly in primary and secondary schools. These interventions emphasized girl education, increase in vocational and technical education and access to education. These intervention programs, operated in Liberia and Sierra Leone, attempted to provide learners basic education equivalent to their ages and maturity; outside of the formal education system to help their mental and psychological health and restore a sense of security and hope (Boisvert et al., 2017). Higher education institutions were left to function on their own even though these institutions were also grossly affected by wars (Boisvert et al., 2017). Public higher education institutions suffered the most because their facilities were turned into displaced centers and refugee camps. Faculty members of public higher education institutions were killed, and some faculty and students aligned to various militia groups.

Conflict and education have evolved as new areas of study, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and the role of education in conflicts (Pacheco, 2013). In areas of higher education, emphasis has been placed on higher education and conflicts focusing on

funding, and quality education delivery (Gbollie & David, 2014). Unfortunately, documentation of higher education administrative challenges in post-conflict situations are limited. The gap becomes even more pronounced in the context of examining the governance and administration of public higher education institutions in West Africa following periods of violent conflict. Since the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, literature on higher education administration is scarce. One cardinal area of concern is how governing bodies for public higher education institutions are established. Public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone have no shareholders, although they do have boards of trustees that confer authority. In other words, many candidates are hand -picked for reasons unrelated to managerial competence. Unlike in public education institutions, in the business sector, board members are selected based on their ownership, which provides them with a keen sense of purpose in their managerial tasks. Boards of public higher education institutions face inherent problems of lack of authority over the educational structure with diverse structures for polarization. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Boards of all public higher institutions of Learning are appointed by the President of the Country, who serves as titular head. There are fixed positions allotted to politicians, businessmen, and other persons of societal relevance.

Statement of the Problem

Higher education administrators are plagued with a plethora of administrative problems in post-conflict situations, which differ significantly from others encountered during periods of peace. Higher education institutions in West Africa are confronted with many problems which are worsened by violent conflicts. These have a direct bearing on educational governance and the quality education delivery. This study examines the challenges in the administration of public higher education institutions in the 21st century, a case study of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Previous

studies by Cervantes-Duarte and Fernadez-Cano (2016) on the consequences of civil wars on higher educational institutions show that wars affect academic infrastructure, administrators, faculty, students, parents, the teaching and learning environment, including the curriculum, and the society. These administrative problems, which range from infrastructural destruction, brain drain, mental stress, and student population explosion, have direct bearings on educational governance and quality education delivery. There is also growing curiosity about the effects of war on mental health, which could affect educational governance. Musisi and Kinyanda (2020) note a growing interest in researching mental health issues in Africa in relation to factors such as sexuality, health, disease, innovation, climate, politics, culture, origins, race, and economies caused by wars and conflicts. This research investigated the influences of conflicts on the quality of education delivery in public higher institutions of learning and strategies employed to alleviate them. Public higher education administrators respond differently to difficult challenges occasioned by violent conflicts and the effects of these responses have received narrow systematic studies.

Poorly prepared and inexperienced administrators could prolong the challenges of wars and keep institutions stagnant. More professional and experienced administrators could minimize war-related problems effectively and leapfrog public higher education institutions to stability and progress. Other war related problems which affected young people in the post-war educational system is substance abuse among students who were former fighters. Lange et al. (2018) and Evanno (2020) limited their studies to substance abuse prevalence but agree a more multi-sectoral and holistic approach is required to determine the extent of abuse and the interventions necessary. This approach should consider studies on drug prevalence use in public higher education institutions and their linkages to violent behavior in students.

Gbollie and Macpherson (2014) asserted that higher education institutions will make no significant impact on national development if quality higher education, innovation, and new initiatives are not employed. Their assertions were due largely to the challenges affecting higher education delivery, particularly in war affected countries. Rebuilding higher education systems in post-conflict societies requires changing educational systems and constructing damaged infrastructures. Higher education is always jeopardized by civil conflicts to the extent that serious readjustments must be made to justify its presence and secure its existence. Every educational system has the potential to contribute to conflicts and the capacity to ameliorate them. Responding adequately to educational needs in a post-conflict society is not a decision that is optional. Some of the actions taken to respond to post-conflict educational needs included lowering the standard of entrance examinations to admit students into public higher education institutions, retooling faculty and minimizing requirements for faculty promotion. These overarching consequences necessitated the formulation of new education laws, policies, initiatives, and the establishment of new programs. However, post-conflict recovery planning does not always consider higher education.

In Liberia, the 18-year plan for Liberia's recovery, Liberia Rising, specifically states, the traditional method of youth training is unsuccessful, and experiential learning is more advantageous, thereby highlighting the importance of basic, technical, and vocational education. (Government of Liberia, 2013). In fact, the only reference made to higher education in the plan is that the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) will encourage private providers to extend higher education to underserved region in Liberia (Government of Liberia, 2013). Public higher education institutions are not captured in the plan even though the primary goal of the plan is to make Liberia a middle-income earning country by year 2030 with more than half of the

workforce employed in the formal sector. A subsequent five-year development plan, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Peace and Prosperity (PAPD, 2018-2023) indicated that higher education in Liberia must reflect the historical and cultural heritage and the power of education to unify and transform to meet technical skills transfer and competitiveness of the global environment. The Pro-Poor Agenda itemized challenges confronting the higher education sector in Liberia as improving the quality of educational infrastructure to incorporate access to ICT for all genders, augmenting instructional effectiveness, promoting gender equality in schools, and offering skills that align with the needs of an evolving economy and a competitive global knowledge landscape (Government of Liberia, 2018). The government of Liberia proposed solutions to these issues, are developing a long-term, strategic plan for higher education, strengthening management and governance frameworks, encouraging high-quality infrastructure and instruction, forming strategic alliances, and tying higher education to the demands of national development (Government of Liberia, 2018).

Sierra Leone's higher education institutions faced similar challenges confronting other war-affected countries, such as inadequate financing and poor staff training opportunities, and a lack of quality management systems. Added to this was the creation of a condition where university course content was asymmetrical with students' needs and the job market. Graduates lacked the skills and knowledge needed in the workplace. The Education Sector Analysis of Sierra Leone stipulates higher education standards dropped because of the war and the curricula was not structured to meet the country's needs (Education Sector Analysis, 2020). To remedy this, Sierra Leone established a National Commission for Basic Education with the flexibility to provide for formal and non-formal education which allowed a student to drop out and return at certain points in the system. Emphasis was placed on technical and vocational education to give graduates more marketable skills (Education Sector analysis, 2020). This study examined the challenges in the

administration of post-conflict higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, practices of conflict resolution , leadership styles and their impacts on quality higher education delivery.

Purpose of the Study, Research, Aims and Objectives

This qualitative inquiry seeks to examine the lived experiences of university administrators in conflict and post-conflict contexts, aiming to enhance understanding of administrative challenges and contribute to the generation of new knowledge in post-conflict institutional governance. The study will serve as a model for administrators in dealing with administrative problems encountered in post- conflict management and provides practical lessons on higher education administration and possibilities for further research.

Research Aims

The aims of the study are to examine the challenges in the administration of public higher education institutions in the 21st century with emphasis on Liberia and Sierra Leone which experienced violent conflicts. The aims of the study are to:

1. Identify the key challenges faced by administrators in public tertiary institutions within the post-conflict contexts of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

2. Explore innovative strategies employed by administrators to address these challenges.

3. Evaluate the capacity of public higher education institutions to deliver quality education despite war-related challenges.

4. Examine potential measures that administrators of higher education institutions can utilize in post-conflict environments.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. Assess the challenges encountered by HEIs administrators and their responses.

2. Analyze the impact of these challenges on the administration of HEIs.

3. Propose effective mitigation strategies to address these challenges.

4. Develop actionable recommendations derived from the research outcomes, intended to guide university administrators, policymakers, and researchers in strengthening governance and educational quality in post-conflict contexts.

Nature and Significance of the Study

This is a qualitative study that examined post-conflict challenges in the administration of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The researcher used qualitative case study because of its importance in   examining real life situations of participants who cannot be experimented with. The key participants were purposively selected based on their knowledge, experiences, personal history, and perspectives working as administrators or policy makers in public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone and the relevance of their experiences in addressing the research questions and objectives. Criterion-based selection or purposive sampling is a procedure used in qualitative research to categorize and select participants based on their knowledge and experiences about phenomena of interest. (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposeful participant selection is also useful in situations where resources are scarce and participants are available and willing to participate in the study to share their experiences and opinions (Bernard, 2002) & Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Significance of the Study

The relevance of this work lies in its potential to inform higher education reform, guide policy decisions, and enhance administrative practices in post-conflict contexts. It is significant to education because it provides opportunities for the discovery of new knowledge to assist administrators of war affected public higher education institutions understand the complexities of

war related challenges in higher education administration and how to tackle them. Information obtained from the study of post-conflict administrative challenges, has propositions for higher educational governance, future higher education policy formulation, administrative guidance, research, and development. This study serves as a template to stakeholders in countries which experienced violent conflicts like Liberia and Sierra Leone. It will enable these countries to solve perennial problems confronting public higher education institutions and help correct anomalies in the management of these institutions. Beneficiaries of the studies are governments, higher education policy makers, administrators, non-governmental organizations, researchers and students.

Theoretical Significance of the Study

Administrative, Scientific, and modern leadership theories underpinned this study. There are different concepts of leadership from historical perspectives to modern times. Administrative, scientific and modern leadership theories are significant for the study because they provide bases for educational governance and leadership. Proponents of administrative and leadership theories of management date to Plato (429 to 347 BC) and Aristotle (384 BC to 322 BC). Plato and Aristotle promoted equality, justice and the common good for all in an organization, regardless of class and stressed leadership styles based on individual characteristics, training, change promotion, vision planning, commitment, teamwork, roles of leaders and followers and adaptation to change found in modern leadership. Born & Megone (2019) expounded that the wise will lead for the ignorant to follow and delineate classes within an organization. Similarly, administrative management propounded by Henri Fayol in 1916, Scientific Management of Frederick Taylor, and Education Management are not remote from education administration and administrative management theories. The objective of education administration is to link education policies with administrative

skills for implementation. Higher education institutions are part of the social structure of the larger society affected by negative and positive societal changes which have consequences for curriculum, administration, quality education, delivery systems, knowledge acquisition and transfer, and adaptation of attitudes and practices inimical to national development. The negative influences of war on education are displacement of faculty and students, infrastructural damage, and prolonged periods of closure. Conflicts also increase situations where ill-prepared young people are forced into the workforce. According to UNESCO (2018) conflicts destroy the aspirations and hopes of young people and drive them to desperation and possibly crime. Several studies have demonstrated uncivil behavior in youths in public higher education institutions linked to substance abuse and peer influence caused by conflicts. Substance abuse is considered a major contributing factor that could stifle the role of higher education in post -war recovery and weaken advancement in post-conflict countries. Liberia and Sierra Leone face serious problems of substance abuse because of traumatic influences of the war. While these countries are struggling to normalize and escalate development processes, they continue to struggle with the consequences of the wars.

Practical Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are important for policy makers who are direct beneficiaries because it will enable them to design education administrative policies to manage public higher education institutions more effectively. The study is also significant to policy makers because it provides evidence-based research to inform public policies. Moreover, administrators of public higher education institutions will benefit by engaging qualified academic and non-academic staff in administration. The result of this study will provide guidelines for administrators to adopt effective leadership approaches for effective management in the study area. Faculty will find the study beneficial by making use of relevant information and materials to deliver quality education

to students which will qualify them to compete nationally and internationally. Finally, the study is significant for researchers who can apply these findings to their studies of conflict management in the administration of public higher education institutions. The study also provides guidance to managers of these institutions. The study also provides guidance to alumni on how to assist managers of these higher education institutions, especially in areas of fundraising.

Daniel et al. (2020) cite some of these higher education administrative challenges, such as inadequate government finance, poor infrastructure, poor quality of faculty and staff, limited access to academic resources and governance. These challenges are not unique to war-affected African countries, though they are exacerbated during periods of armed conflict. The challenges and devastation encountered by HEIs in conflict situations extend beyond physical infrastructure, staff development and access. In conflict situations, new challenges are present that require new strategies, programs, and methods to guide educational governance.

Public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone were selected because these neighboring West African countries simultaneously experienced civil wars occasioned by similar circumstances. The higher education institutions under study existed before and after the wars and therefore present opportunities to explore the effect of civil wars on the administration of public higher education institutions. This study serves as an impetus to identify post-conflict challenges in higher education administration and guide administrators, implementers and policy makers working in post-conflict public higher education institutions in Africa and elsewhere.

Transformation in world economies, socio-political structures, new technologies, globalization and demands for trained labor force are creating challenges in higher education administration. These factors, compounded by civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, regional and international pandemics of Ebola and Covid 19 make it imperative to institute new policy

directions for higher education. Policy formulation is also driven by local and international factors which shape how policymakers view higher education and respond to challenges. Sawyer (2014) asserted that the role of African Universities is not unique from other universities in the United States of America, Japan, and the Soviet Union established to address national development needs. Expressed state interest in higher education demonstrates the need for higher institutions of learning to fulfill the national development objectives of countries in the world.

Higher education is important to solve some of the complicated development problems Africa and other countries are confronted with. Higher education institutions are constantly forced to demonstrate their significance to society propelled by knowledge-based economies. The emphasis on knowledge transfer is driven by factors such as demands and expectations of interest groups, changes in the labor market, demographic trends, and socio-economic development (Pinheiro et al, 2015). Higher education also provides opportunities to develop the human person, and instill values, mores, and norms that bring about social change and development (Anyaogu & Anugom, 2015).

This study serves as an impetus to identify post-conflict challenges in higher education administration and guide administrators, implementers, and policymakers working in post-conflict public HEIs in Africa and elsewhere. This inquiry contributes to the body of knowledge in addressing West African higher education administrative challenges in post-conflict societies in Africa, drawing from the experiences of Liberia and Sierra Leone. This study also provides possibilities for further research involving administrative challenges of other private and faith-based institutions of higher learning in post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Research Questions

To structure the inquiry, this study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1.   What are the challenges in the administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone?

RQ2.   How do administrators respond to the challenges in the administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

RQ3. What are the impacts of the challenges in the administration of public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

RQ4. What mitigation strategies are possible for the challenges in the administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a literature review that provides insights into the higher education frameworks of Liberia and Sierra Leone and provides the basis for understanding the effects of civil wars on the administration of public institutions of higher learning. The review is divided into four parts. The first part is an introduction that sets the historical basis for this investigation. The second part deals with the theoretical framework while the third and fourth parts deal with administrative challenges of public higher education institutions impacts and approaches. This section examines administrative challenges of public higher education institutions in advanced countries such as the USA and Europe, the administrative challenges of public higher education institutions in developing countries and specifically administrative challenges of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Theoretical /Conceptual Framework

Administrative, scientific, and modern leadership theories form the basis for this study. Administrative management theory propounded by Henri Fayol organized management into 14 cardinal functions, while scientific management by Frederick Taylor applied scientific principles to management by developing a science for each aspect of work. More modern leadership theories such as transformational and contingency theories also provided some directions for this study. Transformational leadership by Burns and Bass is a leadership style in which leaders strive to share their vision and work to bring out the best in employees to attain organizational goals. Contingency management theories rely on the principle that the best way to manage is based on internal or external influences.

Administrative management theory, propounded by Henri Fayol sought to find a rational way to set up an organization. Administrative Management organized management functions and blended the roles of management. Administrative theory sets up key structures of power and authority based on fourteen principles of management. According to Fayol, excellence in management is a technical skill that can be acquired by anyone. Fayol developed principles and theories of management which are universally accepted and plummeted him to the position of father of modern administrative management. According to Fayol, these 14 management principles were division of labor, authority and responsibility, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, subjugating self-interest to the organization's, scalar chain, order, equity, job security, taking initiative, and a spirit of togetherness. Fayol (1916) believed that an organization is multifaceted with diverse people, cultures, technologies, and processes. Managers have the responsibility to recruit and distribute staff, secure, allocate, and control resources, and coordinate the business of the organization (McLean, 2011). Fayol (1916) developed a hierarchy of power with authority flowing from the top down and recommended an additional five elements of management, planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and control, as appropriate types of behavior management should have to meet organizations' goals (Adams et al., 2023).

Consequently, Fayol defined management as the administration of an organization, business, institution, government, and managing resources, Management is also perceived as the process of planning and organizing the resources of an organization to achieve certain goals efficiently and effectively. Management functions are dynamic and evolve changes and adaptations in the environment. According to Fayol, management is the running of the business by moving it towards the accomplishment of its objectives through a continuous process of improvement utilizing available resources (Fayol, 1916). Fayol emphasized that management seldom applies the

same principles twice because each situation will require a different treatment according to the circumstances. Before Fayol and after, other management theorists developed various approaches to management.

Scientific management theory, propounded by Frederick Taylor in 1911, viewed management scientifically by using experiments, analysis and generalization of the parts of management processes. Taylor believed the objective of management is wealth creation for the employer and employees. Therefore, employees should be trained to contribute their best since success can only be achieved through maximum production based on shared interests between employer and employee. Taylor based inefficiency on three things (a) an increase in material production would result in the displacement of manpower, (b) employees will slow down work to protect their interest and (c) inefficient management practices which wastes employees' efforts.

Based on observation in shop management, Taylor suggested that it is a natural tendency of employees to take it easy and slow down work to disguise how fast work can really be done. Taylor further argued that eliminating unnecessary bureaucracies which slow down work and replacing them with faster methods will increase output. On principles of scientific methods, Taylor considered best management practice as one of incentive and reward, where management rewards people for work, and workers will give their best. Taylor's numerous principles of management is based on the principle that the main goal of management is to ensure the greatest possible prosperity for both the business and each employee, which means management and employees should collaborate to get the most out of each other and be equally compensated (Taylor, 1911). Workers would benefit from shorter working hours, better remuneration and a better work environment. Taylor believed workers should concentrate on efficiency and/or education and labor while managers should be held accountable for enhancing performance. Basically, Taylor's four

principles of Scientific management were to advance a discipline for each component of work (Taylor, 1911). Scientific management did not attempt to coerce workers to produce at their maximum in a short period of time but concentrated on finding out how much work a person could do properly in a given period, i.e., a day, week, month, or year. The emphasis was on long-term productivity based on the management and employees' perspectives. Taylor sought to determine maximum productivity by getting the best workers to perform a task, pay them good wages and test them to ensure they were performing to the best of their abilities. This meant workers would be timed to determine how long it took for each task, select employees scientifically, train, teach and develop them. Taylor (1911) viewed employees' selection of where they should be based on suitability for the job. It followed then that employees should be trained by competent teachers to lift their proficiency levels and allow them to perform at set standards. Taylor suggested work should be distributed to employees according to functions they were best suited to, working in harmony with other employees. Taylor (1911) held the view that a division of labor and responsibilities between the employees and manager allowed managers to enforce methods and cooperation in exchange for extra wages for performance after completing tasks.

Scientific management theory was criticized as treating human beings as machines. While Taylor dealt with a scientific approach to work based on specialization and simplification, cooperation and achieving productivity, opponents viewed it as too mechanical without taking the human dimension into consideration. Birnbaum and Somers (2022) looked at the similarities between Taylor's scientific management and the use of machines and artificial intelligence and argued that unskilled workers could be easily replaced and excluded from processes that governed their behavior. Birnbaum and Somers (2022) concluded the similarities have been overlooked and limits understanding of how machines can influence productivity and the work environment.

Taylor's work continues to influence organizations today, especially in areas of efficiency and effectiveness, productivity and time utilization, and management control of the organization. Eliminating opportunities for chance or accident through the scientific investigation of every aspect of labor was one of the guiding principles of his management style. Workers were expected to complete each assigned task within a specified timeframe. Scientific management theories are used in public higher education administration today to improve quality, encourage accountability, change the structures of lecture halls, and improve examinations and evaluation procedures. According to Trujillo (2014), Scientific management theory manifested in public higher education through monitoring, testing, and competition, and the practice of hiring competent professionals to collect data on schools' operations, evaluate performance, and make recommendations to maximize productivity. Public higher education institutions aligned their management principles to public policies, which made specific demands of administrators. For example, policies of the Sustainable Development Goals, Education for All, and No Child Left Behind are policies that require public higher education administrators to fulfil specific mandates. Using core principles of scientific management, higher education administrators should ensure every aspect of education must be used to further the goals of the educational process, with teachers' content delivery being governed by predetermined scientific methods and student learning entirely predetermined. This makes it possible to divide the curriculum into content units that could be standardized, predetermined, taught in a linear fashion, and easily assessed (Smith, 2004). Therefore, by usurping a sizable amount of power from lecturers, as workers and allowing for increased oversight of their instruction, the application of scientific management principles to education allowed for continued administrative control over the teaching process which has nothing to do with job satisfaction (AU, 2011).

Moreover, Owens (2014) and Stoller (2015) maintained the control of public higher education institutions through administrative and legislative policies of regulatory bodies. Franklin Bobbit, a strong proponent of scientific management, claimed that efficiency required the centralization of authority and clear supervision by the supervisor of all processes carried out so that there could never be any misunderstanding as to what is expected of a teacher in terms of results or method (Au 2011, & Stoller 2015). Consequently, Taylor's tasks are viewed as learning outcomes, the final product of student learning which are based on predetermined objectives used to evaluate students, in higher education institutions (Stoller, 2015). In view of the above, Stoller (2015) stated that the major shortcomings of the application of scientific management to public higher education administration within the context of learning are students' background and experiences, which are paramount and can influence learning outcomes. Additionally, these outcomes must be adaptable and subject to change if they do not support the learning process. Therefore, educational goals do not end in themselves because learning is cumulative, progressive, not definable, and tied to continuous reconstruction and ends after the entire learning process.

The Human Relations Theory of management which commenced in 1935-50 to handle human beings as people. The human relations theory is the result of the Hawthorne studies propounded by George Elton Mayo who examined the impact of social interaction, motivation and the satisfaction of employees on their productivity. Elton emphasized the social interaction over organizational functions and the effect of two-way communication, bottom up and top down. He argued effective communication was necessary for communicating organizations' goals and decision making (Tolibovna, 2020).

The human relations theory of management developed out of a study of human interactions and interpersonal relations in organizations. Human relations theory of management deviates from

scientific management by its emphasis on the human person. According to the human relations management philosophy, individuals want to be a member of a team that fosters growth and development. Employees will feel their job is important and will be inspired to be more productive, which will lead to high-quality work if they receive special attention and are encouraged to contribute. The principles of human relations management clearly emphasize individual recognition and attention congruent with the notion of human connections, motivation and research of interpersonal relationships in the workplace.

The principal proponents of human relations theory were Elton Mayo and Mary Parker Follett who emphasized human needs and their behavior in an organization. Human Relations Theory of Management was developed from an empirical study of Elton Mayo and his associates such as Roethlisberger, Dixon, and Follett who conducted studies at the Hawthorne Plant of Western Electric Company in Chicago, United States between 1920s and 1930s (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2011). The empirical research was designed to test the effect of lighting intensity on worker productivity, and the influence of human relations on work behavior (Mayo, 1933). This study of a suitable management approach was the result of the perceived inhumane holistic approach of classical approaches, such as scientific and administrative management theory. The failure of classical theories, therefore, gave birth to the human relations approach in an organization, which came into actual existence in the 1930s as an alternative to the classical approach to organizational analysis (Hartzell, 2017). This is because the classical theorists appear to have neglected and underemphasized the importance of humanism and socio-psychological aspects of an individual's behavior as a panacea.

The Human Relations Theory of Management developed out of an empirical study by Elton Mayo and collaborators like Roethlisberger, Dixon and Follett who carried out the study at the

Hawthorne Western Electric Plant in Chicago, United States between 1920s and 1930s (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2011). Elton Mayo, considered the father of Human Relations Theory, participated in an experiment, the Hawthorne studies at the Hawthorne Electrical plant, which sought to observe the impact of lights on the attitudes and interactions of workers in the workplace. Around the 1920s, Elton Mayo and other scholars joined Hawthorne Studies. The Hawthorne Plant worked with the National Development Council (NRC), a United States federal organization that supports science and technology research. The company's engineers ran several illumination tests to gauge how lighting affected employee productivity. The study had unexpected results leading to more studies and inquiries and the employment of a Harvard research team, which included Mayo to assist with finding answers to the inquiries. Researchers observed the alteration of people's conduct during the trials because of an investigation that looked at interpersonal relationships and group dynamics (Trahair, 2017). Mayo learned from the Hawthorne studies that productivity was not solely driven by financial incentives. On the other hand, several social and environmental variables raised production (Trahair, 2017). Several tests were carried out in the Hawthorne plant between 1924 and 1927. Using the team's findings as a foundation, Mayo felt the possibility that workers' mental attitude contributed to their behavior. Mayo opined that work satisfaction depended on the informational social structure of group, and its functioning. Mayo stressed the supervisor could be trained to perform new functions that would encourage him to care for his subordinates and carry out his tasks. Mayo (1933) held that employees should be forced to articulate their wants and communicate with company representatives fearlessly and openly. The foundation of the human relations theory was productivity, championed as new principles of labor relations. The Hawthorne experiments cited that both the social and psychological elements at work and the physical circumstances of the job influence employee productivity and morale. The human relations theory

stressed that non-monetary incentives and penalties impacted employee conduct, morale, and production. The Hawthorne research found that employees are social beings who are not passive, alone, or unconnected, and individuals in the workforce are likely to develop informal groups in the organizations. The Hawthorne studies demonstrated the importance of communication, involvement, leadership style, and supervisory style in influencing employee behavior, satisfaction, and productivity (Dahal & Manoj, 2016).

However, other contributors to the human relations theory of management, Hunt and Jacob and Doug McGregor and Moreno, influenced and impacted the evolution of human relations theory by their research. Their research suggested that a democratic group that engenders a feeling of inclusion among members and allows them to participate actively in decision- making is more successful in achieving personal, individual, and organizational objectives. In Higher education administration, the Human Relations Theory emphasizes the importance of group work which indicate that the educator and learner share a similar platform with one purpose for consolidative learning (Tolibvana, 2020).

The Human Relations Theory stressed meeting the needs, satisfactions and strategies of subordinates and incorporating them for increased productivity. Pokhrel (2022) stated that not recognizing and appreciating employees in human resource management could negatively limit the efficiency of the entire system. The importance of human relations to higher education is that working collaboratively instructor and learner share views and the needs of students and instructors match each other to achieve shared objectives (Pokhrel, 2022). Since education is involved with teaching and learning, motivation for satisfaction and productivity plays a significant role in learning outcomes. There are many benefits of the human relations school to higher education administration which includes employee-centeredness, democratic decision making, team spirit, a

conducive and cordial work environment and satisfaction. Tolibvana (2020) is of the opinion that an institution whose administration uses human relations management stresses employees' satisfaction and motivation to build a congenial learning environment in which administrators, faculty and students are enthusiastic about the vision of the institution and their success. Mayo and other proponents of the human relations theory, Douglas McGregor, Mary Follett, and Abraham Maslow agreed the recognition of the human element increases institutional effectiveness (Tolibvana, 2020). Human relation theory influenced higher education administration by democratizing education administration, promoting harmonious relations between administrators, employees and students, promoting group authority within legal education structures, creating the atmosphere where the educational administrators have the responsibility to satisfy the psychological needs of employees (Pokhrel, 2022). The theory also involves inclusiveness, belonging, recognition and participatory decision making. The human relations theory, based on the Hawthorne experiment, resolves that workers' satisfaction, productivity and behavior are a result of communication and styles of supervision and leadership (Dehal & Manoj, 2016). This is realistic because university managers and administrators are focused on executive responsibilities, such as the development and implementation of policies, decision-making, and running of the organization's affairs, for effectiveness and, most importantly, to maintain order. As a result, for the organization's objectives to be met, there must be systematic use of both human and physical supplies, positions, and chances (Pokhrel, 2022). According to Omodan et al. (2020), higher education institutions can benefit from the application of human relations theory to improve personnel management and minimize crises in the university system to achieve greater productivity. While the human relations school made significant contributions to higher education administration, it is criticized for stressing human needs over achievement and responsibility.

Leadership Theories

Leadership theories and practices are numerous and difficult to assign to a particular study. Leadership theories refer to characteristics and behaviors people use to promote their capabilities as leaders. Some of these theories are behavioral, contingency, great man, management, participative, power, and relationship. This study relies on various schools of thought relative to leadership and their relevance to higher education administration. Leadership is no longer equated to leaders and is now examined as a process (Kezar, 2017). The Behavioral Management Theory rates leaders based on their behaviors, actions, and leadership philosophies. This school of thought states that all it takes to become a persuasive leader is to adopt a particular set of behaviors. According to the behavioral theory of leadership, the actions of competent leaders determine their work ethics and success and are essential to an institution's ability to succeed. According to behavioral theory, you can tell what kind of leader someone is by looking at and analyzing their actions, behaviors, and reactions to circumstances. This theory contends that successful leaders are built through learned behavior. This leadership theory emphasizes evaluating the actions of leaders to predict leadership success. Leadership styles of behavioral theorist leaders are results-oriented, task-oriented, people-oriented, and dictatorial (Kezar, 2017).

Leadership in higher education today warrants a new form that takes into consideration internationalization, collaboration, innovative approaches to financial sustainability, and partnerships. Changing financial environment increases in international partnerships, trusts for greater accountability, new corporate higher education strategies, technologies, and changing demographics are problems that require leadership solutions in higher education, especially in post-conflict societies. Cooperative leadership arises as an important element for institutions that require learning, creativity, effectiveness, and realignment to face challenges occasioned by

conflicts Kezar & Holcombe (2021). According to Kezar and Holcombe (2021) shared leadership is defined as moving away from the dual leader/follower to capitalizing on the importance of leaders throughout the organization, not only those in power positions; and creating an infrastructure where organizations can benefit from the leadership of multiple people, which is different from governance. Shared leadership involves team empowerment with support from people in authority and colleagues who have a common purpose, accountability structures, interdependence, fairness of rewards, and shared understanding and experiences (Kezar & Holcombe, 2021). The Human Relations Theory relates to education because it stresses efficiency generated by motivation and morale-based appraisals (Pokhrel, 2022).

Administrative and Leadership Theories in Higher Education

The primary objective of leadership theories is to provide information on the traits of leaders. The trait theory is the first assumption. The second is the behavior theory, which focuses on the conduct and behavior of leaders. The contingency model is the third. The fourth and fifth leadership theories are transactional theory and Transformational. All five theories provide leaders with the information necessary to carry out their responsibilities in an effective way to foster the growth and progress of people and the organization. The inclusion of gender in leadership is also considered in this study. This element highlights the fact that in the present, women are also working on upgrading their skills and talents to attain leadership positions.

Therefore, it can be claimed that obtaining an effective grasp of leadership theories is significant and helpful for the organization's growth and development. This study also explored the application of various leadership theories in public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone after their respective civil wars to find out how applicable they were to the prevailing circumstances and how useful they could be to other administrators in similar situations. The Trait

Theory of Leadership suggests certain qualities differentiate leaders from others. Leadership is defined in various ways. The environment in which leaders in various roles and settings operate is always evolving so people comprehend leadership from many vantage points. It is believed that the fundamentals of leadership are the same for all leaders in all roles. There are leaders in every form of organization. These include the directors, chiefs, principals, teachers, and supervisors. These individuals have the authority and power to execute leadership abilities in relation to other people irrespective of changes that occur regularly. Leaders must guarantee that these adjustments are advantageous and valuable for the other individuals and the institution to alter their methods and strategies to fit existing situations. Due to differences in talent required, responsibilities and activities accomplished, leaders must employ their leadership skills effectively (Kumar, 2020).

Previous Application of the Framework

Administrative leadership theories have been applied in various studies in health, social science, and education. Taylor (2015) used administrative theories to look at the history of administrators in early higher education, with more emphasis on the registrar's job, and subsequently on how that changed over time. Ahmed (2022), Aydin & Uysal (2011) and Archibald (2008) utilized administrative theories in higher education to provide insights to examine the contribution of these theories to higher education. Pike (2018) used administrative theories to look at leadership styles in higher education administration. Leadership can promote an organization or render it ineffective. Administrative and Leadership theories were used in studies of higher education administration to determine the effectiveness of managers. Education management draws from other fields of study which links educational management to managerial goals of other disciplines. Also of importance is the link between educational management and leadership styles as propounded by Bush (2010). Bush believed leadership in education could be broken down into

six categories, formal, collegial, political, subjective, ambiguity and cultural model which he linked to nine leadership styles within the educational institutions. These corresponding leadership styles were managerial, participative, transformational, transactional, postmodern, emotional, contingency and moral. In the formal model, Bush concentrated power at the top of the organization where managers are responsible and accountable to other superior bodies for the operations and policy implementation. In the second or congenial model of education management, decision making is based on consensus arrived at after discussion with other members of the organization who share organizational objectives.

Transformational leadership is based on focusing on the capabilities and obligations of individual members of the organization to achieve organizational goals and efficiency (Bush (2010). Anderson (2017) postulates that leadership styles have been confirmed to bring about change, improve performance and commitment and increase organizational effectiveness. A leader who works with others to initiate change, guided by shared vision, is considered transformational.

In educational settings, it is hardly possible that one form of leadership style is sufficient since educational leaders must constantly adapt to changes in the environment. The situation becomes more compelling with managing educational institutions in turbulent situations. According to Anderson (2017) any leadership style that is void of improvement is irrelevant. Consequently, Public Higher education administrators managing during violent conflicts and after conflict situations are constrained to adapt to environmental circumstances. In this study, we examine the leadership styles used by administrators of higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone to determine what worked best after violent conflicts.

This research is framed in theories of administrative management, scientific management, human resource management and leadership because they embody the totality of what leadership

should have in higher education administration. Managing public higher institutions of learning is tedious. A leader should have managerial and technical skills including educating, developing and managing employment related functions of hiring, terminating and motivating. These skills must be demonstrated in leadership styles, and the ability to adjust to challenges and change. This requires the use of leadership styles which are effective in influencing employees about the institution's goals and how to achieve them. Leadership theories considered in this study are administrative management, scientific management, human resource management and modern management.

Relation of the Theoretical Framework to the Current Study

Research by Smith (2014) suggested literature on the relationships between conflict and education is not conclusive about causal relationships which looked closely at issues of control, form, and content across different cultural contexts; is ample justification to study the role of education in conflict situations. This suggests that gaps in studies related to post-conflict higher education administrative challenges, which can be derived from theories of administration selected for this study, are the relevant frameworks to analyze the role of conflicts in higher education administration to derive understanding from the data and findings.

Employing administrative and leadership approaches will yield verifiable results using methods of thematic analyses. Administrative theory is relevant to this study because administrative challenges experienced by public tertiary education institutions in post- conflict countries can be determined by studying actions, interactions, patterns, and strategies to derive meaning. Data collected and analyzed from this study could lead to the discovery of consequences of civil wars on the administration of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra

Leone. The data could discern the applied leadership styles used during and after the conflicts and contribute to the emergence of new knowledge in higher education administration.

Conceptual Framework

Students in post-war countries are the most disadvantaged educationally. According to UNESCO (2020) over two hundred million children were affected by conflicts in the world. These pose serious challenges to educational systems and highlight the necessity to address the educational needs of youths. The concept of the investigation is to demonstrate the relationship between administrative, scientific and modern leadership theories to the management of public higher education institutions post-conflict societies. The term administration is used in many disciplines and generally refers to organizational leadership, management and goals accomplishment. The administration of HEI requires the collaboration of all persons of interest operating in an environment that considers regulatory frameworks, governance structures, and styles of administration (Al Khajeh, 2018). Administration is defined as guiding, leading, and controlling the efforts of staff towards achieving common goals and objectives. Administration involves the functions of planning, organizing, managing human and material capital, directing, controlling and budgeting (Al Khajeh, 2018).

Administration in Education institutions is known as educational administration with core objectives to enhance teaching, learning, and research. Therefore, educational administration is the practice of managing available resources to achieve educational goals. According to Lasambouw et al. (2019) management is the synchronization of human and material resources through planning, organizing, directing and controlling events to obtain institutional objectives to attain specific educational objectives. Higher education administration adopts practices of administrative, scientific, and modern leadership theories in the management of institutional assets, planning,

coordinating, organizing, directing, controlling and evaluating curriculum, faculty and student performances. Administrative functions of higher education involve the management of colleges and universities, supervising educational programs, faculty, staff, students and directing the progress of the institutions.

These theories reinforce the study because they embody administrative practices necessary for the efficient management of higher education institutions and are applicable under all circumstances. This study sought to discover which theories were most useful in managing HEIs in the post-conflict situations of Liberia and Sierra Leone. This study draws on leadership tenants of various schools of administration because the researcher set out to derive explanations from the research findings pivoted in the administrative experiences of the participants as discovered in the data. Various schools of thought make distinctions regarding the leader and leadership. Leadership and leader are interchangeable terms in trait and behavioral theories. Studies frequently concentrate on leadership roles, such as presidents, vice presidents, provosts and deans. Leaders are no longer synonymous with leadership in later theories of contingency and power influence, which look at leadership as a process. Studies are starting to look at leadership in terms of groups and how it is distributed among different organizations and institutions (Kezar, 2017). In Higher education administration in Liberia and Sierra Leone, leadership played a significant role in how these institutions were governed, especially during periods of violent conflicts and their aftermath.

Functions of Administration

The adoptive functions of administration in higher education institutions make them synonymous with the administrative functions of other disciplines with slight variations. Higher education administrators must grapple with combining leadership with evidence-based practices and new developments in technology (Pace University, 2022). Critical functions of higher

education administration center on financial decision-making, staff supervision, curriculum design, provision of student services and conducive teaching and learning environment, strategic planning, facility management, keeping good relations with the community, infrastructure, program, staff development, and research. The core function of educational administration is to prepare people to achieve their fullest capacities while managing all education-related activities.

Purpose of Higher Education

The rationale for higher education is to produce and distribute knowledge and develop the emotional, social, interpersonal and economic abilities of students. Higher education promotes personal development, economic, technical and social change through knowledge exchange, research and innovation to satisfy the demands of the job market (UNESCO, 2023). The purposes of higher education shifted over time, allowing for the massification of higher education in Africa, the need for increased access, affordability, diversification of programs, equity and equality (Swartz et al., 2019). Higher education now focuses on personal development through knowledge exchange, innovation and research which enables a person to add value to the socio-economic development. However, there are overarching demands for public higher education institutions to deliver quality education that competes with other learning sectors nationally and internationally in terms of teaching, learning and research.

Structure of Higher Education in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Higher education in Liberia and Sierra Leone comprises all education acquired after the completion of high or senior secondary school. The Liberian higher education community is made up of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutes, junior or community colleges, health institutions, teachers' training colleges, and private and public higher education institutions licensed by the National Commission on Higher education (NCHE, 2022). Teachers

Training schools offer two-year programs leading to "C" certificates in teachers' education while the community colleges award associate degrees in various disciplines. Students obtaining associate degrees can matriculate to full degree granting institutions upon completion. HEIs in Liberia are classified as private and public according to their ownership. These classifications are structured on seven levels based on the qualification awarded from certificate to post-doctoral degrees. Level one is certificate granting institutions while level seven is institutions offering four or more doctoral degrees as the highest qualification (NCHE, 2023). A management team, subject to the President of the public higher education institution and approved by its Board of Trustees, administers the affairs of these institutions, guided by a charter. Institutional governance of public higher education institutions in Liberia is the prerogative of individual Boards of Trustees with the President of Liberia as visitor and chairman, ex-officio. The visitor to an academic institution does not necessarily refer to a person with high academic achievement but one qualified by title of the governing instrument of the institution. The National Commission on Higher Education regulates and accredits all higher education institutions in Liberia (NCHE, 2022).

In Sierra Leone, higher education institutions consist of technical and vocational institutes, professional schools, polytechnics, teachers' colleges, and universities (MTHE, 2023). Technical and vocational education is geared towards preparing students to fit middle level positions in the workforce. Higher education institutions in Sierra Leone are structured into three levels: universities, institutions offering undergraduate degrees and institutions offering certificates and diploma programs (TEC, 2023).

The Tertiary Education Commission, TEC, regulates all tertiary institutions in Sierra Leone, fosters good governance and quality assurance, and make periodic recommendation to the Ministry of Technical and higher education, MTHE, (TEC, 2023). Public Universities in Sierra Leone are

governed by the chancellors appointed by the President. The administrative responsibilities of public universities are handled by a management team headed by the vice- chancellors. The University Act of 2021 in Sierra Leone removed the president of Sierra Leone as Chancellor of all public higher education institutions and relegated the role of chancellors to independent parties to give more autonomy to public universities. The President is now visitor to all public universities in Sierra Leone.

Several studies have been done on the impacts of civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Davies (2005), Jang (2012), and Kieh, (2016) delved into the causes of the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Most of these studies dealt with factors such as the political and socio-economic impact of the wars on the people and society and implications for the development of these countries. Rarely have these studies touched on the administrative implications of these wars for higher education. This study looked at problems associated with the administration of public higher institutions of learning in post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone, the strategies devised to alleviate these problems, and the effects these problems have on the public higher education institutions' abilities to govern and deliver quality higher education. Global Monitoring Report (2015) asserts that African countries continue to experience conflicts over the last four decades with over 17 countries involved in various forms of conflict. While conflicts are subsiding in some African countries, they are escalating in others. According to the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2015), African countries represented 40% of the 42 conflict-affected countries in the world.

Table 2.1

Conflict-Affected Countries, 1999-2014

Conflict-affected countries: 1999-2014		
Afghanistan	Indonesia	Rwanda
Algeria	Iran	Serbia
Angola	Iraq	Sierra Leone
Burundi	Liberia	Somalia
Central African Republic	Libya	South Sudan
Chad	Mali	Sri Lanka
Colombia	Myanmar	Sudan
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Nepal	Syria
Côte d'Ivoire	Niger	Thailand
Eritrea	Nigeria	Timor-Leste
Ethiopia	Pakistan	Turkey
Georgia	Palestinian territory	Uganda
Guinea	Philippines	Yemen
India	Russian Federation	

Key:

Black: 2011 list

Blue: 2011 list but no longer identified as conflict-affected in 2013

Red: Joined list in 2013.

Brown: Added list to list as 2014 update

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2015

Of 32 conflicts reported in the world in 2021, 15 or 47% are in Africa. Of the 98 socio-political conflicts reported in 2021, 40 of these are in Africa followed by Asia 24, the Americas 12 and the Middle East and Europe 11 respectively. Crises classified as high intensity occurred in 10 African countries. High-intensity conflicts are conflicts across states where two or more states are involved. High-intensity conflicts are in West Africa, Central Sahel, and West Chad. Some of these

conflicts are over resource allocation such as the conflict between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan over access to the Nile River which remains deadlock (Davis, 2021).

Figure 2

Map of Conflict-Affected Countries

Courtesy of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Sipri (2020)

The number of conflicts in Africa today indicate that social services, including higher education, in these African conflict zones will be adversely affected. These conflicts have incessant ramifications for social services, human capacity development, economic recovery, political stability, and restoration of higher education systems. Ironically some of these conflicts have been going on for decades, such as the conflicts in Somalia, Congo. Higher education is generally referred to as formal education beyond secondary or high school levels which culminates in a qualifying certificate or degree. Higher education is organized sets of specialized courses of study which provide training in institutions like polytechnics, technical, vocational education, and

training (TVET) colleges and universities. Alemu (2018) distinguished higher education institutions from universities by limiting higher education institutions to professional training whereby a university combines a community of scholars and higher education institutions. Higher education is considered the nucleus of the socio- political, economic, and cultural development of a country which contributes significantly to an improved standard of living (Fussy,2018 & Abugre, 2017). Knowledge acquisition is recognized as an empowerment tool for economic development.

As a spin-off, Africa's progress is linked to the number of its citizens who acquire quality tertiary education, enabling them to make contributions to the growth and development of their respective countries. 65% of Liberia's 5.3 million population is under the age of 35 (LISGIS, 2022). According to the Liberian Ministry of Education, of that number 10.4% of these are youths who reportedly had tertiary education (Ministry of Education, 2016). That number quadrupled between 2015 and 2021. An estimated half of these students are enrolled at the University of Liberia where student enrollment climbed from 14,000 in 2018 to 22,000 in 2021. New higher education institutions are being established to meet the high student population seeking higher education. In 2018, only 51, 679 students were enrolled in tertiary institutions in Liberia with females accounting for 20,986 and males 30, 693. (NCHE, 2021) statistics of students entering higher education institutions are rising exponentially. At the University of Liberia, enrollment increased from 17,000 in 2020 to 22, 000 in 2022. Current statistics from 2022 admissions and placement examination of the University of Liberia indicate eight thousand nine hundred students passed and are likely to enroll in 2023 (University of Liberia, 2023). A comparative analysis of students by preferred areas of studies at the University of Liberia shows a shift from traditionally popular disciplines to science, Engineering, and Technology.

Table 2

Enrollment Statistics, University of Liberia by preferred areas of study, 2018-2021

Statistics by colleges	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Business	11,317	4,856	7,015
Engineering	3,533	1,438	1,855
Health Sciences	780	554	1,050
Social Sciences	5,260	1,750	2,191
Science & Technology	388	2002	3,407
Agriculture	5896	2018	2,522
Education	3,400	1,159	1,360

University of Liberia (2022)

While African countries continue to make strides in higher education, they are experiencing delays in innovation, technology, and research. Recent developments of the global Coronavirus pandemic highlight the unpreparedness of most African HEIs to deal with the delivery of quality education due to poor infrastructure, low connectivity, lack of access, faculty and students' preparedness, and closures of higher education institutions. Currently, Sub-Saharan Africa registers the highest number of closed institutions of higher learning, estimated at 77% (Ekwamu, 2020). However, African higher education institutions cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the historical perspectives of their evolution. African countries were largely colonized by Britain, France, Portugal, Germany, Spain, Belgium, and to some extent America. African countries were partitioned by colonial countries, along political lines, following the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 without any regard for family ties, culture, language, or shared history. The main objective of the Berlin West Africa Conference, held from November 15th, 1884, to February 26th, 1885, was to establish conditions under which African countries could be colonized and managed by creating the legal, socio-political, and economic basis to divide Africa without

African participation. The outcome of the conference was an act ratified by major colonial powers and the United States of America which detailed how African territory could be acquired. Fourteen European countries divided Africa among themselves creating artificial boundaries and states without regard for and rationality of social, familial, cultural, political, or linguistic sensitivities. (Thompsell, 2019). Though the Berlin Conference was significant for Europe, politically and economically, its effect on the social structure of African countries infiltrates social, cultural, and educational systems today. European countries met and decided to divide Africa and create quasi states controlled by Europeans. This division of Africa resulted into British, Portuguese, French, Belgian, Spanish and German Africa. According to Mark and Nhengeze (2018) Germany took, Tanzania, Rwanda, Togo and Burundi and Cameron while France took Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Morocco, Gambia, Senegal, Tunisia, Algeria, and Gabon. The British took Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, and Lesotho leaving the Portuguese with Cape Verde, Angola, and Guinea Bissau, Mozambique.

The case of Liberia was slightly different because unlike the direct colonization by an existing country, Liberia was founded by freed American blacks supported by the American Colonization Society, comprising philanthropists, abolitionists, freed African Americans, and some members of the American Government. The American Colonization Society was founded in 1837 to support and promote the immigration of freed black slaves to Africa as an alternative to the emancipation in the United States of America. The Government of the United States was not interested in establishing Liberia as a military, economic or political colony and felt America's interest would best be served if Liberia could replicate American political values; though there was no clarity on how this would be done (Mills, 2014). A key concern was reducing the large number of freed slaves and removing them off the shores of America by returning them to Africa.

In 1822, the first group of freed blacks settled on the Liberian Shores as a second haven after the initial group had perished in Sierra Leone. The Coast of Liberia remained outside the Berlin Act of 1885 because it was a freed country recognized by the United Kingdom in 1849, France in 1852 and the United States of America in 1962. Paradoxically, when Africa was partitioned by the Berlin Conference, the territory of Liberia was bordered by British colony of Sierra Leone on the west and the French colonies of Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire, on the northwest and east, respectively.

Sierra Leone was colonized in 1787 by freed slaves from England, Nova Scotia and Jamaica sponsored by a private Sierra Leone Company until 1808, when the British Government made it a crown colony (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2022). After World War II, Sierra Leone gained independence from the British Government in 1961, but remained within the Commonwealth of Nations, a political association of 56 countries or former British colonies responsible for promoting peace and prosperity and free democratic societies.

Ironically, in the 1950s and 60's when most African countries gained independence from colonial masters, they met in Sanniquellie, Liberia, in 1963 and formed the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the forerunner of the current African Union, and agreed to maintain all boundaries imposed by colonists (Thompsell, 2019). Colonial Africa inherited a Eurocentric or American educational system patterned after the country that colonized them. Consequently, higher education in African countries after colonization is patterned after the colonial systems of the British and French which aims were largely to educate colonial descendants and replace educational systems of colonized countries whose goals were to provide youths knowledge and skills to function in the labor market (Murwira, 2020). African education was planned to match the planners which was the colonial system, to provide laborers, without taking into consideration

Africa's uniqueness of poverty, ignorance and disease which requires redesigning the system to include innovation and industry to create jobs and provide the professionals to man these jobs (Murwira, 2020).

Discussions on the history of Higher education in West Africa must be positioned within the context of prevailing circumstances which nurtured their existence. West Africa comprises fifteen countries, Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso, Niger, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria. Four of these are English speaking while the rest are francophone or Portuguese indicating the countries of colonial dominance. Pinto (2019) believed that colonial education was not only strange to the African culture but also geared towards manipulation and domination. Uzomah (2018) concurs that colonial education in Africa was not intended to develop African knowledge and cultural values but to undercut African history and the philosophies of the native Africans in order to transform these into a new form of pseudo refinement. Consequently, this imposition could not provide solutions to Africa's challenges. The case of Liberia was slightly different since it was not officially colonized but freed blacks which founded the country patterned its educational system after the United States of America without regard for the indigenous people who occupied the land before their arrival.

Earlier institutions of higher learning existed in Africa before periods of colonialism. Formal education consisted of teaching and learning in formal settings grounded in philosophical foundations of communalism, functionalism and perennialism. Before the introduction of the Western-style formal education systems, Africa had its educational systems to train and socialize with its youth. There is unmistakable proof that there was a state-run educational system in place during the many long-lived dynasties of the Pharaohs. It has been suggested that the Old Kingdom,

which began in 3000 BC, is when education first began along with written Egyptian history (Heard, 2021). There are some striking parallels to our current system, and archaeological evidence has confirmed pictures of kids sitting at desks in schools and listening to lessons from teachers who are seated at larger desks. There is no doubt that the numerous long-lived dynasties of the Pharaohs had a state-run educational system (Heard, 2021). Current available information indicates their real curriculum was not unusual and included conventional disciplines like math, astronomy, geometry, reading, writing, geography, music, athletics, manners, medicine, and moral teaching. Anyone with the resources often sent their children to school at an early age because education was highly valued (Heard, 2021). In large portions of Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Sande and Poro societies, which have been in existence for centuries, are recognized as the trusted keepers of cultures and tradition. These societies are said to instill morals, impart knowledge that promotes social harmony, and help kids get ready for adult responsibilities. Although they are not recognized as religious organizations, they have a spiritual component, and most Sande and Poro members also practice Christianity, Islam or African Traditional Religions (UN December 2015).

The Sande Society is a female traditional organization geared towards training young girls for womanhood. The Poro and Sande systems prepared youths formally and informally to coexist in society and contribute meaningfully to societal development through life-long learning experiences (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2002). According to Assie-Lumumba (2006), indigenous education was more than just socialization; there was a stratification of elementary, secondary, and higher levels, despite opinions that disregarded the methodical organization of the higher learning space in Africa prior to the arrival of Western colonial power. Among the oldest institutions of higher learning in Africa is the University of Alexandria in Egypt, which dates to two or three

centuries BC. Higher learning institutions in pre-colonial Africa could brag about a tradition of higher learning that subscribed to the search for knowledge for its own worth (Lulat, 2005).

In 1833, a Liberian, Duwale Bukele invented a script for the Vai language. Other indigenous communities in the area were motivated to develop their own scripts because of the Vai script's popularity. Since the 1830s, at least 27 different scripts have been developed for West African languages. At the University of Liberia today, the Vai writing system is taught, and even non-Vai students find it appealing. The Vai script is now a part of the Unicode Standard, which enables Vai speakers with smartphones to text each other in the script (Kelly et al., 2021).

The European colonization of Africa altered the educational institutions of African nations significantly. Prior to colonialism, most African educational institutions were oral, with information handed down either formally or informally from one generation to the next, through an initiation ceremony. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, (2020) the impacts of European colonists on educational systems in Africa were by religious missionaries from Portugal, France, Holland, England, and Germany. These missions established schools, translated the Bible and provided religious education to the indigenous population. They also engaged in exhaustive studies of African languages (Britannica, 2020). The missionaries deemed African education system inferior to western education even though it emphasized respect, social responsibility, law, order and mutual assistance (Jeremiah, 2018).

What colonial education did was to superimpose on African peoples a new Eurocentric system of education, alien to Africans which was divorced of their culture, values, mores, and norms; and failed to produce solutions to the continent's problems of underdevelopment and poverty. The European education system failed to provide solutions to Africa's economic and

political problems because it was not designed to develop African values and knowledge but to superimpose Western concepts of civilization on an African people (Uzomah, 2018).

Political capital and access to higher education were decided by European political leaders who determined the beneficiaries. There are numerous schools of thought on the benefits and disadvantages of colonialism on the evolution of Africa's HEIs.

However, instead of serving as a means of social control, HEIs in Africa became the means of subversion of colonial systems (Lulat, 2005). As a result, the colonizing nations imposed their educational system on the colonies. Colonial administrations learned they acquired strength over colonized nations through physical and mental control accomplished through education. The educational objective of the colonizer was to introduce Africans to a higher civilization. The colonizers believed that education would bring Africans into the modern world and raise their level of civilization. However, the conquerors' need for a trained local workforce for economic progress and their desire to spread Christianity prompted them to employ education to exert social control over African people (Mart, 2011). While most writers cite the negative aspects of colonialism on the African educational system, some positive effects were illiteracy reduction, change in ways of imparting knowledge and skills, and alignment to other educational systems of the world (Jeremiah, 2018).

Root Causes of Problems Affecting Higher Education in Sierra Leone and Liberia

The introduction of Western education in higher institutions of learning in Sierra Leone and Liberia dates to the 1800s. Sierra Leone was established in 1787 by British philanthropists and abolitionists, and Liberia by the American Colonization Society and freed African Americans in 1847 to solve problems of an increase in the population of freed Africans in these countries (Everill, 2013) & Paracka, 2003). Early education in these colonies, as in other parts of Africa, was rooted

in Christian Mission school's instrumental in providing vocational and technical training to develop middle managers to work in colonial bureaucracies. Colonial authorities invested more in higher education for territorial governance and economic acquisitions (Posey, 2014). This approach to education raises questions about the characteristics of African higher education. Whatever the rationale for establishing higher education institutions in Africa, the fact is that most of them are patterned after European or American educational institutions. While other colonized countries struggled for independence and the growth of higher institutions of learning, Sierra Leone and Liberia had established universities in the 19th century.

Fourah Bay College, the second oldest institution of higher learning in Africa and first in West Africa, was established in 1827 by the Anglican Church missionaries. Paracka, (2003) noted that Fourah Bay College, before its affiliation with Durham University of England in 1967, was compared to Greek city of Athens in Africa because of the quality education and civilization it offered. Liberia College, the forerunner of the University of Liberia, was envisaged in Boston, Massachusetts and established in Liberia 1862, over a hundred years before the struggle for independence in Africa (Livingstone, 1976). Liberia College was the first American College to operate outside the United States with the sole purpose of providing higher education to black emigrants. The initial concept was to develop a theological seminary to train missionaries and catechists, the same rationale for which Fourah Bay College was founded (Livingstone, 1996). Fourah Bay College was expected to maintain international British educational standards of academic excellence to be recognized as a university. Liberia College, on the other hand, was forced to maintain standards of Universities in the United States since it was conceived and financed by the American Lincoln University of Pennsylvania and Wilberforce College, Ohio, as an American degree granting college operating in Africa (Livingstone, 1976). A Trustees of

Donations for Education in Liberia, (TDEL) handled its finances then, as it operates the University of Liberia's trust fund lodged in the United States now. When Liberia was established as an independent country in 1847, the necessity for a higher education institution became apparent. Liberians looked to the United States for direction and help. A group of Boston business and academic leaders formed the Trustees of Donations for Education in Liberia (TDEL) in 1850 to find fundings for Liberia College, authorized by the Republic of Liberia in 1851. The initial fund was utilized to erect a structure and attract instructors. The institution opened in 1862. Liberia College swiftly rose to prominence as the country's premier higher educational institution (TDEL, 2022).

The current 24-person board of the TDEL does not include any Liberians or authorities of the University of Liberia. The TDEL is a Massachusetts charitable educational corporation No. 15869 established with the goal to support and establish one or more education institutions of higher learning in order to advance education in Liberia, and which continues to support Liberia College (now the University of Liberia) to date. TDEL is exempt from federal income taxes under the Internal Revenue Service of the United States of America, Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3), and is categorized as a private foundation. Donations to TDEL are to be used to fund programs at the University of Liberia (TDEL, 2022). The TDEL website makes no mention of annual funds from the University of Liberia's rented properties of more than two million dollars lodged with them annually since 2007. The website, however, refers to donations to the University of Liberia which have risen from $120,000 (one hundred and twenty thousand United States dollars) in 2021 to $125,000 (one hundred and twenty-five thousand United States dollars) in 2022. The donations are derived from interests on the endowment funds. Endowments are to generate a steady flow of income to the university to spend on its operation or development.

Fourah Bay College and Liberia College metamorphosed into the University of Sierra Leone and the University of Liberia respectively and were absorbed as colleges within the Universities. It can be argued that from the onset, these institutions were rooted in British and American history and cultures with no aspect of the curriculum reflecting African identities. However, Olaniyan & Olajumoke (2013), argued education in Africa began at the start of African societies which pre-dates colonialism.

Educational systems established by colonial governments co-exists in most West African countries alongside traditional schools like Poro and Sande societies which keep and imbibe traditional values, and norms (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). Both Liberia and Sierra Leone recognize and allow the operation of these traditional schools. The extent to which there is an interaction between the two educational systems and how they influence contemporary higher education has not been sufficiently explored. Nevertheless, African higher education systems and governance have come under extreme scrutiny when juxtaposed to Western higher education institutions which generally set guidelines and standards for Higher education in Africa. Today, Liberia has three public universities and eight public community colleges while Sierra Leone has three public universities and two polytechnics. (National Commission on Higher Education, 2020) and Tertiary Education Commission, 2020). From the inception public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone were confronted with a myriad of problems involving administrative responsibilities of governance, funding, staffing, and infrastructure development which were difficult to surmount. Additionally, civil wars in these countries, particularly Liberia and Sierra Leone further devastated educational systems posing more serious challenges for public higher education institutions. The civil war in Liberia spanned 14 years, 1990 -2003 while Sierra

Leone's civil war lasted for a period of eleven years from 1991 to 2002 Isiani, (2019) & Fyanka (2019).

Administrative Challenges of Public Higher Education Institutions in Developed Countries

Administrative challenges in public higher education institutions in developed countries, particularly the United States, Germany, and Great Britain, were inherited from medieval European education. Different factors and historical developments, including civil and world wars, influenced what they have become today. This portion of the study examined the challenges in the administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in developed countries that experienced wars, with the United States, Great Britain, and Germany as reference for comparison between those institutions and others in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Administrative Challenges of Public Higher Education Institutions in the United States of America

The establishment of higher education institutions in America dates to colonial times when higher education institutions were built around reasons for the establishment of the American colonies. Thelin (2011) and Geiger (2016) cite elitism, family wealth, religious dissentions from the established Anglican religion, which hindered male offsprings from matriculating to Royal universities in Britain, as reasons for the establishment of higher education institutions in the United States. The two renowned universities in Britain Oxford and Cambridge did not welcome the early American settlers' puritan's sense of respectability, religion or education.

Most early American higher education institutions such as Yale, Princeton and Harvard were rooted in Congregationists and Presbyterian religion which aimed to breed gentlemen of stern Christian beliefs to inherit families' businesses, wealth, community leadership and responsibilities by providing them liberal arts education. Colleges in other American colonies in the South expounded

the same values of educating sons to fit a wealthy social order (Thelin, 2011). Though these institutions are more advanced now, civil wars and world wars have led to major changes that are engrained in how public or state-run higher education institutions operate today. Destruction caused by the American civil war and World Wars one and two provided new opportunities for colleges to reconstruct themselves and provide prospects for government support for American higher education institutions (Cohen, 2012). One of these opportunities post-World War II was the passage of the Servicemen Readjustment Act (SRA) of 1944, also known as the GI Bill, which encouraged war veterans to get college education. The GI bill changed the focus of higher education from liberal to vocational education and encouraged acceptance of less wealthy students and African Americans into higher education (Batten, 2011 & Cohen, 2012).

During the American Civil war of 1861 to 1865 and World War II, college campuses were restructured to meet war demands. HEIs served as military bases with students drafted to fight the wars leaving faculty opportunities to develop partnerships with the government for mutually beneficial goals (Cohen, 2012). The expansion of student population in the United States and clamor for diversity in student enrollment challenged many public funded universities to match expenses to available resources since government funding accounted for a minute percentage of full financial cost of students' education (Belkin, 2018).

Major challenges in the administration of PHEIs in the United States are funding of public or state financed universities, student retention, technology promotion, access, diversity, learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness (Ngo, 2010). Hearn et al. (2016) argue regions are bent on developing world-class universities driven by international indicators of rankings, scientific research, and publications. With State funding dwindling, leading PHEIs institutions engaged in cost sharing, increased tuition cost and student loans. In the United States, funding to higher

education institutions, which declined due to recession, remained low after adjustments to high enrolment and inflation. U.S. funding to higher education constitutes a small portion of federal spending of two percent of the national budget but is the third largest expense account in state's budgets. (Pew, 2019). Funding from the United States Government to higher education institutions are apportioned according to the type of institution, public, private, and private non-profit with majority of the funding to support public institutions accounting for 70% of all students admitted into higher education (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). In the last 20 years, financial support from the federal government, state and other programs have changed from grants to loans, making it difficult for low-income students to enroll in public higher institutions of learning.

Funding gaps at public higher institutions of learning in the United States have been addressed by increase in tuition. Belkin, (2018) noted that students in more than half of the states in the United States are paying more in tuition fees than government contributions. The regular cost for a four-year public college or university increased by 50% between 2008 and 2017, while public spending per student declined by 24% within the same period (Belkin, 2018). Additionally, a shift from public funding of PHEIs to private funding had ramifications for school enrolment, selection, and access.

Administrative Challenges of Public Higher Education Institutions in Germany

German Higher education dates to the founding of the University of Berlin in 1809, based on the concept of teaching and research with autonomous self–governance in all in-house educational business a model adopted by higher education institutions in other countries (Wolter, 2004). The period between World War I and World War II split German higher education between East and West Germany stagnating growth of PHEIs despite increased government funding and encouragement of coordination. At the end of World War II, the entire German University system

laid in ruins with damaged infrastructures, future scholars killed, and professors linked to the Nazi party not allowed to teach. German Universities reopened, after World War II with the allied powers of the United States, France, United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union transforming the German education System by eliminating Nazi ideology from the curriculum and establishing educational systems in their respective occupational zones reflective of their ideas. Two years after World War II, Germans reasserted themselves and German universities doubled their pre -war numbers (Labkowicz,1987).

Currently, most of the higher education institutions in Germany are public institutions financed by the state with tuition free courses at the bachelors' and, in most instances, masters' level (UNESCO, 2022). However, German Government contributions to higher education are draining due to high student enrolment, changes in social conditions and increase HEIs which make it difficult for HEIs to perform adequately (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). In the 1990's, German PHEI'S underwent massive reform in governance structures, teaching, and funding, with each of Germany's 16 states conforming to its own higher education act, giving greater autonomy to institutions (Hutler & Krucken, 2018). German PHEI's also experienced massive increase in student and faculty due largely to third party funding for research drawn from public funds. PHEIs continue to be state supported, and tuition fees have not been levied since 2014, making higher education free (Hutler & Krucken, 2018).

In public higher education institutions' governance, the German federal government devolves management to the states with its involvement limited to regulations and policy. A major government reform, enshrined in Article 5.3 of the German constitution, makes arts and science, teaching, and research free. Decision making is the prerogative of an institution's board of Governors which includes members of the PHEI leadership. Regulations, guidelines, and statutes

set the basis for faculty promotion and income. Presidents of German PHEIs have responsibility for the coordination of the institutions' activities (Hutler & Krucken, 2018).

Administrative Challenges of Public Higher Education Institutions in Norway

Norway ranks in the top echelon the most advanced countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with one of the highest gross domestic products (GDP), per capita rates and one of the lowest levels of government debt. This means that Norway was able to maintain higher education spending in the years following the economic downturn. The employment rate in Norway is relatively high, making it one of the progressive countries within the OECD, with income inequality among the lowest in the group. The OECD comprises 37 countries with market- based economies which work together to build policies for economic growth (OECD, 2019). As a result of this favorable environment, students in Norway are highly supported, and there is significant investment in education systems at all levels. In Norway, around 275 000 students are enrolled in higher education programs. Higher education is provided by public and private institutions (OECD, 2019).

The United Nations Human Development Reports designated Norway as the second- best nation to live in (United Nations' Human Development Report, 2021/22). According to the OECD, (2022) the Norwegian tertiary education system is predominantly public; 96% of educational institution expenditures are funded by the government. In Norway, the guiding policy is to provide tuition free education for all with limited exceptions. The higher education degree in Norway is based on the Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD structures, as well as the European credit transfer and accumulation system (ETCS), which makes it easier for Norwegian students to gain credit for their certification in other countries. The ETCS makes it possible for academic credits from one higher

education institution to be credited in another educational institution to attain a degree based on clear learning outcomes and course loads (European Commission, 2020).

Public universities and higher education institutions in Norway fall directly under the Ministry of Education and Research. The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research is solely responsible for higher education. Each institution has a committee that decides the administration and organization of its activities. Universities and colleges select which courses of study and subjects they will offer at different degree levels. The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and the Norwegian Center for International Cooperation in Higher Education are also involved in the governance of universities and other higher education institutions. Higher education institutions are state owned and academic qualifications are enshrined in the Royal Decree of October 11, 2002, revised in 2005 (Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, 2022).

Public Higher education institutions, including small ones, are scattered across the country. Half of the fifty-three higher education institutions have fewer than 2000 students, and one-fifth of these institutions have enrollment of fewer than 250. According to the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance (2022) this relatively decentralized institutional structure shows Norway's strong commitment to assisting regional economies. Norwegian tertiary education policy is intricately linked to the broader policy goal of preserving spatial population distribution patterns (NMER, 2005). The geographical spread of higher education institutions aims to increase tertiary participation in rural areas, reduce the exodus of educated people to larger regions such as Oslo and Akershus, and relieve pressure on traditional universities (OECD, 2009).

The Norwegian Government announced an objective to improve the quality of higher education and research and create more vibrant research communities where resources are better

concentrated on key activities. One of these efforts has been the formation of a task force charged with developing a comprehensive plan for more efficient use of the institutions' systems. Olsen and Trelsgard (2016) assert that the individual institutions and their systems have grown increasingly independent, and the systems are often distinct and not always meant to interact. This makes cooperation difficult and costly. Some administrative and research registration systems have advanced to the point where they are now utilized as national resources. Though the Norwegian public tertiary education system is rated as one of the best in Europe, it is not free of challenges. Norway's generally public and tuition-free higher education system encourages participation and boasts high levels of achievement. However, issues persist in the areas of spending efficiency, study time, skills demand, inclusivity, and quality. Moreover, learning outcomes might be improved. In addition, few Norwegian institutions rank well internationally based on research-related and other measures, and spending per student is very high. Staff and student numbers at several small universities that try to satisfy regional requirements fall short of critical mass. Most public higher education institutions spread out across Norway aims to reduce concentration in urban areas and support for the economies in rural areas (Koutsogeorgopoulou, 2016). Many students spend a substantial amount of time to complete their studies despite financial motivations, and students from poorer families do not pursue tertiary education, and in situations where they do, completion rates are poor despite heavy emphasis on inclusivity. According to Koutsogeorgopoulou (2016) although enrollments in subjects like science and engineering have improved in recent years, they are still comparatively low, and supply constraints in several professional professions show that there is potential for improvement. This indicates a need for better incentives for both students and institutions to enable timely completions based on placement for disadvantaged students and labor market demands. This framework allows for

suitably sized institutions, and effective governance is required for higher quality education and research. Vitally important is also outcomes monitoring (Koutsogeorgopoulou, 2016).

A key challenge within the Norwegian higher education system is the inability to conduct internationally competitive research. Many institutions cannot benefit from external funding, which places Norway behind other Nordic countries (Government of Norway, 2015). Another major challenge faced by the Norwegian higher education sector is low completion rates. According to the Government of Norway (2015) national statistics show that less than half of the students who enrolled in a bachelor's degree program complete their studies in three years, giving rise to many students who spend more time to complete their degrees in the specified times. Many students who do not complete their degrees in five years drop out (Government of Norway, 2015). Non-completion and late completion of degrees can be attributed to several problems, including poor academic preparedness, lack of career assistance, and sluggish study progression (Hovdhaugen, 2012; OECD, 2014; PC, 2015). In Norway, however, the cost of attempting and failing tertiary education is inexpensive due to the absence of tuition prices and the availability of jobs.

This results in a strong demand for postsecondary education, yet completion may receive minimal attention and reflect choices of what to study. Hovdhaugen (2012) suggested work obligations as the most prevalent cause for tertiary education dropout rates in Norway, indicating that the robust employment market plays a role in non-completion or inactive study advancement. These results could also indicate students' inability to properly balance employment and school. In addition to student incentives, late completions may reflect the high degree of flexibility of the tertiary education industry, which permits adjustments to study curricula and encourages taking vacations or breaks in their studies (NMER, 2014). Available statistics (Eurostudent IV) indicate,

for example, that more than one in ten students in Norway took a longer-than-one-year break from their studies, exceeding the proportions in other Nordic nations (Orr et al., 2011). A flexible system can offer several benefits, including allowing a student to change his or her major area and pursue another study path more in line with their interests. There are obstacles to completion, since students are more likely to drop out the longer it takes them to complete their studies (Hovdhaugen, 2012). In Norway, students are usually older, both when they graduate and when they begin their studies. The latter is a result of many young Norwegians taking off from studies after completing upper secondary school, for example, to travel or work (OECD, 2009). Most Norwegian tertiary education students are above the age of 25. Older students may require more time to finish their coursework since they typically plan their studies around their employment and financial obligations (Orr et al., 2011).

Quality in Norwegian Higher Education

Numerous studies show that Norwegian higher education coordination and programs are left with administrators rather than academics. The assumption is that the way academic work is organized, governed and implemented affects outcomes. The Norwegian government took the initiative to change the Norwegian higher education in response to the need for a new degree structure and grading system for students, declaration on international education standardization, the level of competition between institutions and countries, and support for the education system. This demand exceeds the capacity of the national budget, making higher education institutions unable to accommodate the growing number of pupils who did not graduate within the required time frame and performed poorly. The solution to these challenges required reforms to optimize the quality in Norwegian higher education (Lomheim, 2007).

According to Lomheim (2007) reforms introduced to the system included emphasis on educational quality, problem-based learning, internal quality systems, linking teaching to assessments and feedback, study financing and specification of the number of years required to complete bachelors, master's and doctorate degrees. Quality reform is considered the most effective and comprehensive reform in Norwegian higher education system (Elken and Frolich, 2017). A key reform was digitization in Norwegian public higher education systems which improved student assessment. Digital technology enabled alternatives to the conventional test, but the emphasis has primarily been on replacing pen and paper with personal computers inside the traditional framework. Nevertheless, a summative written examination is still considered the most preferred (Raaheim et al., 2019). However, a principal challenge is a dearth of knowledge.

Funding Higher Education in Norway

Norway's tertiary education system, which is primarily public and tuition-free, encourages participation and has excellent attainment rates. Most of the Norwegian higher education institutions' revenue comes from a central government block grant. Institutions also obtain finances from the Norwegian Research Council, the European Union, and private projects and donations (Reichert & Ekholm, 2009). Following reforms in 2002, the Norwegian government provided block grants which consist, in broad terms, of rudimentary funding, based on clearly defined conditions for institutions and merit-based funding for education and research incentives, calculated on study credit points, student exchanges with foreign institutions, and research publications. Basic funding accounts for about two-thirds of government funding, with performance-based funding accounting for the remaining one-third. However, issues persist in terms of spending efficiency, studying times, talent demand, inclusion, and quality. Furthermore, learning results could be improved further since few Norwegian institutions rank highly in

international comparisons based on research-related and other measures, and per student or GDP spending is high (Koutsogeorgopoulou, 2016). Norwegian public higher education is publicly funded. The government provides 96% of higher education funding compared to 70% as in the case of other public higher education institutions in European countries. This cost is largely due to spending on scholarships and grants, accommodation and student loans (Koutsogeorgopoulou, 2016).

Norwegian public higher education was initially tuition free for all students irrespective of nationality until 2022. The only fees charged, then, were semester fees which ranged from the equivalent of 55 to 100 United States dollars per semester. This applied to citizens from Norway, the European Union and European Economic Area, EEA which include Iceland and Liechtenstein. However, new government policies dictate that all universities must collect tuition fees as of 2023 based on actual costs for educating one student (Iversen, 2022).

Administrative Challenges of Public Higher Education Institutions in the United Kingdom

The British higher education system predates those of America and Germany. After World War II, the British education system was reorganized with greater autonomy to public-funded universities. Like most Universities in Europe and America, post-World War II also saw the expansion of courses within higher institutions of learning in the United Kingdom to science, despite challenges of poor amenities and infrastructures (Beales, 1951). The independent Higher Education Funding Council, established in the UK in 1992, provided "funds and regulates universities and colleges in England within policy guidelines set by the Secretary of State for education for financial accountability, quality teaching and advice to government on policies and practices in the sector (Higher Education Funding Council Annual Report, 2017- 2018).

In February 2020, the British government suggested a higher education pricing structure for less expensive courses with lower expected graduate earnings in favor of science, technology, engineering and mathematics courses, which affect low-income students' ability to enroll in and complete these courses. Other issues of concern within the UK context are the direct effect of Brexit on post-secondary education which could manifest in lowering the number and participation of other European Union students in British institutions and research funding amidst increasing operational costs. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (2013/2014) stated research grants to British HEIs total 16% of their total research funding in 2013/2014. An estimated 730 million pounds from the EU are spent in Britain for research and development (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2013/2014). The high cost of higher education is forcing institutions to devise more creative and innovative ways to meet rising student enrolment, high operational cost, and low government funding for public higher education institutions.

Equal Access, Enrolment, Increment and Inclusion

Higher education has changed locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally. Public higher education systems globally are challenged by strains of quality, equity, and inclusion in the wake of high student enrolment, diversity, and constraints of public funding (Schendel & McCowan, 2016). Developed countries faced difficulties in determining access, equity and social imbalance in admission to higher institutions of learning. Barriers of race, equal opportunity, social groups, and gender, as well as admission policies, confront HEIs with increased clamoring for access to quality higher education. Attempts to provide solutions to these administrative challenges led to recent legislations like the American College Promise Act of 2015 supportive of access to higher education (Palmadessa, 2017). These challenges differ significantly from Liberia and Sierra Leone where access to PHEIs is handled through admission policies, poor preparedness, and

poverty. The extent to which these policies increase access or decrease it provides another research possibility.

Internationalization and Globalization

Funding for public Universities in developed countries is declining, and institutions are designing new strategies for survival. Most national Public higher education systems are transitioning towards a unified system across regions worldwide. The growing expansion and reconstruction of higher education institutions in developed countries gave rise to new sets of challenges locally and internationally. Locally, these institutions had to meet their own societal demands for access, equality, increased student enrolment, poor funding, and government partnerships while at the same time adjusting to international pressures (Vaira, 2004). Firstly, International organizations like the UN Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the OECD, and the UN began to create new standards for administering higher education by adopting goals for inclusive higher education, academic malfunctions, loss of national competencies, and similar accessibility which were readily adopted. (Resnik, 2007 & Tight, 2019). A key component for consideration is the meanings and context in which these terminologies are explained. Explaining Mass higher education within the United States and the United Kingdom. Trow (1973) defined mass higher education as education enrolling 15% to 50% of the age group and universal higher education enrolling over 50%, with both differing in quantity and quality.

Internationalization and globalization pose new challenges for higher education administration in PHEIs. The definitions for these concepts vary with virtually no clear explanations for the terms. Dagen, et al. (2019) described internationalization as any continuous effort to make higher

education more responsive to the demands and difficulties associated with the globalization of economies, labor markets, and societies.

Globalization is a process where organizations operate internationally. Globalization has an impact on higher education through the internationalization of educational funding, knowledge transfer, knowledge production, and communication. This is achieved through internationally recognized bodies that influence and shape the contexts, standards, and functions of HEIs. Institutional bodies, like the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund, developed general and common frameworks and parameters within which higher education operates today (Vaira, 2004).

International treaties, conventions, and agreements assist in harmonizing higher education structures at the international level, manifesting study opportunities, foreign student exchange for academic credit, international standardization of educational systems, and information, knowledge, and skills transfer. Globalization demands competition in education internationally breaking barriers of distance and culture where people need high qualification and adjustment for acceptance (Mocanu et al., 2013). On the other hand, the globalization shaped by liberal policies led to the propagation of transnational education, accelerated the diversification of higher education supply and the opening of private universities by reducing the number of public universities, and contributing to the vitality of academic life. Moreover, globalization has expanded the use of information technology in higher education. Information renewal and high population increased the demand for information, distant education, education, and internet education. These technological advancements simplified the access to encoded information, but made access to codified more difficult (Balay, 2004) & Dolgun, (2007).

These developments constrained businesses to demand more information and cooperation from universities. Some large-scale businesses, which do not find the information they obtained from higher education institutions very useful, tended to establish their own research units and universities, despite its high cost leading to the purchase of academic skills by the companies (Greenwood & Levin, 2000). While this condition has caused the commoditization of information on one hand, the universities have started information production on the other hand. These worldwide trends have also prompted research into accreditation and quality (Aktan, 2007). Consequently, countries that produce information and information-based technologies have become the determinants of this process, and their philosophies have affected higher education in other nations. A primary component in globalization of public HEIs is the changing world information and communication technologies which provide new opportunities to benefit from quality education without the hazards of cultural and Social displacement. Education in developed countries is accessible everywhere, anywhere, and anytime with access to the appropriate technology at low cost (Mocanu et al., 2013).

The recent COVID-19 pandemic increased online learning in public higher education institutions worldwide and forced institutions to transition from on campus classes to virtual on-line learning. A survey of college and university presidents on their reaction to the COVID 19 Crisis in 2020 cited challenges as accessibility to online learning platforms and tools, faculty readiness to conduct online learning and technological readiness to conduct online classes, decline in enrolment locally and internationally, and student attrition (Handover Research Survey, 2020). It is too early to ascertain the consequences of COVID-19 in developing new administrative challenges for Public higher education institutions over a prolonged period. However, current trends demonstrate major changes are imminent in public higher education institutions in Africa,

particularly in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which are shifting to blended online learning. While some public higher education institutions in developed countries are using technology to mitigate administrative challenges of access and student expansion, and knowledge delivery, PHEIs in developing countries are still catching up. A more radical approach to leapfrog technological development and innovation might be necessary to bridge education gaps between public higher education institutions in developed and underdeveloped countries.

Contextualizing Administrative Challenges of Public Higher Education Institutions in Developing Countries

There are no clear-cut definitions for what constitutes a developing country. Numerous indicators such as the state of development of its level of industrialization compared to other more industrialized nations, gross domestic product and human developing index have been used by international bodies to classify countries. For purposes of reference and statistics, the United Nations agencies and other international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund group countries into categories based on the development of their economies or their membership in the Group of seven and economies in transition or developing based on their geographic locations such as Africa, East, South and Western Asia, Caribbean and Latin America (World Bank Statistical Index, (2018) & United Nations Country Classification (2018). The United Nations Developing Program (UNDP) classified developing countries as countries generally thought of as poor, under industrialized with poor economic and social structures. All 54 African countries and 83 others in Latin America, Asia, and Southeastern Europe fall into this category (World Bank, 2013). Various international documents have been signed by these countries, all of which emphasize the right to education at various levels, with higher education being the primary area of interest.

The 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights' assertion that equal access to higher education should be merit based (UN 1948, Art 26, Paragraph 1) is buttressed by the sustainable Development Goals which specifically states that by 2030 member states should ensure balanced access to high-quality, reasonably priced technical, vocational, and postsecondary education, including university, for all women and men (UN, 2015). This raises serious questions of access to higher education, affordability, equity, and the availability of HEIs to meet this demand and professional staffing quality. For education to play such an important role in society, it is necessary to ensure that funding for higher education is sustained. However, in many countries, public spending on higher education has decreased in recent years (Tilak, 2006). This trend in higher education spending can be attributed to factors such as economic reform programs that share the belief that the state should play a limited role in higher education funding. The declining rate of public funding for higher education is most visible in several areas, including total public spending on higher education. According to Ilie, & Rose (2016) in Sub-Saharan African and Asia countries poverty, wealth and gender gaps are wide reflecting inequalities in preparatory schools which should be addressed if these goals are to be accomplished. These inequalities and challenges spill over into higher education which is recipient of these students. The World Bank acknowledges higher education promotes growth, poverty reduction, innovation and a more skilled and employable workforce which benefits the individual and society (World Bank Group Report, 2019). In developing countries in Africa, South Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, the young population continues to grow and present challenges for policy making in higher education to correspond to current social and economic needs.

Public Higher Education in Developing Countries

A general review of administrative challenges in Public higher education globally highlights rapid expansion, reduction in public funding, income generation from corporate sources, shift from liberal arts to science, technology, engineering, agriculture and math to commercialization and internationalization of higher education. (Tilak, (2015), Tefera & Altbach, (2004), and Sumoworo, (2015).

In developing countries, higher education plays a pivotal role in economic development. Consequently, higher education institutions are acknowledged as forces for modernization and national development. (Tefera & Altbach, 2004). The extent to which these objectives are met are contingent on factors such as availability of adequate funds for higher education, access, student and faculty preparedness, proper administrative management, and effects of the internal and external environment. Though developing countries have been lumped together by international bodies based on their own classification, there are marked differences between countries in regions, particularly in African and Asia and their approaches to public higher education administration. Educational systems in Asia are as diverse as Africa because these two regions comprise numerous countries and are divided into five geographic parts, south, west, east, central and north. Some Asian and African countries were colonized by Britain, Portugal, and France and heavily influenced by them. Other countries, such as Ethiopia, Egypt and Liberia were not.

Javis and Mok (2019) stated that fifty years ago, Asian higher education system fell behind others due to the region's varying development and underinvestment in the higher education sector, which affected expansion, participation, innovation, reform, and research options but the situation changed due to international trends, competitive global rankings, teaching quality and graduate learning outcomes. The situation is not true of all Asian and countries. Public higher education

institutions in South Korea and Japan are financed by public funds with enrolment rates among the highest in the world and could account for more than half of global enrolment growth in a few decades (Jung, 2019). Waites (2012) noted that South Asia and African states, with all their diversities, were grouped together in the international system and categorized as having a common history as nascent non-aligned and developing countries. This lumping together of countries, dissimilar in geography, ethnic diversities and culture, is heavily influenced by the commonality of the imposition of their political boundaries by colonialists, inheritance of colonial institutions, underdevelopment, language, and administrative systems which makes them easy to compare.

Although similar in context, South Asian and African universities educational systems cannot be generalized due to diversity of history, governance structures, cultures, socio political and economic systems, education philosophies and objectives. Africa has 54 states and South Asia eight. Most of these educational systems are deeply rooted in influences of colonialism, neo-colonialism and more recently attempts by international non- governmental agencies to apply new measures to address problems in African education systems. These problems are generally viewed from the context of appropriate environments for teaching and learning, educational governance, curriculum relevance, funding, personnel management, interpersonal skills and rarely from post conflict assessment. Most often, African universities are thought off by international partners and financiers in terms of short-term emergency formulas which emphasize rehabilitation and revitalization, especially in post-conflict situations where more emphasis is given to basic education. (Aina, 2009). This is generally because war situations shortened the time children spent in school, limiting their social and economic development. Additionally, primary education prepares students for higher education. While both forms of education are important, people with primary education have the basis for lifelong learning through the molding social and cognitive

skills and Higher education prepares a person for careers in life. A strong primary education provides a good basis for higher education which makes it difficult to select one over the other.

The effect of economic, political social pressures and conflicts on African and South Asian universities have been documented by Sumoworo, (2015), Teferra & Altbach, (2004) and Tilak, (2015). These are cited as reduction in operational revenues, increased student loans, brain drain, poor capabilities for research and teaching in public universities, poor infrastructures, inadequate and unqualified staff, high enrolments, and outdated curricula. Structures of Public higher education in Africa and South Asia were basically created during periods of colonialism and financed by colonial governments. After African and South Asian countries gained political independence, the higher education sector continued to be financed from national resources. The sector developed and diversified with numerous changes which shaped its growth and development. These were socio-economic conditions, political governance, civil wars and wars between neighboring states, changes in the world economy, technology development, and knowledge production and transfer. In South Asia, there have been massive shifts from free education due to cuts in public budgets to increased efforts of cost recovery through increased tuition fees for students (Tilak, 2015).

Administrative Challenges of Public Higher Education Institutions(PHEIs) in Developing Countries

Challenges in PHEIs in developing countries in Africa and South Asia have been documented by scholars, international organizations and national governments as poor funding, inequitable access, poor research capabilities and initiatives, poor ICT driven education, inadequately qualified lecturers, expansion pressures, gender inequality in enrolment, adapting new structures massification, increased demand for cost through increased student fees and loans and increased corporate support (Asamoah & Mackin, 2015; Teferra & Altbach, 2004, Drape et al.,

2016; & Tilak, 2015). While all these challenges do not apply directly to each developing country, they represent key issues in public higher education administration during periods of normality. Countries in Asia and Africa experienced external and internal conflicts which adversely affected their education systems in various ways. Afghanistan's war of over three decades devastated higher educational systems resulting to other issues of capacity, enrolment explosion, poor infrastructures, under -qualified lecturers; a situation which contrasts with PHEIs in India and Sri Lanka which are adequately funded and equipped (Wilkes et al., 2011). In West Africa, civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and terrorist uprisings in Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Mauritania broke down the systems (Annan, 2015). While numerous research studies have been conducted on conflicts and their impacts on educational structures and challenges posed, the opportunity exists to explore administrative challenges of public higher education institutions within a post -conflict context.

Firstly, the number of higher education institutions are limited when compared to enrolment ratios which are also low compared to other parts of the world. According to the World Bank (2018), there were 1,682 universities in Africa, from 784 in 2000 and 294 in 1980. This evidences the fact that higher education has experienced explosive growth. Yet, in global terms, With only 8.9% of the world's 18,772 higher education institutions, Africa crawls behind Asia (37%), Europe (21.9%), North America (20.4%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (12%). (World Bank, 2018). The total number of students in African higher education institutions in 2017 stood at 14.6 million out of 220.7 million worldwide, or 6.6% (World Bank, 2018). Secondly, many African universities suffer from inadequate financial resources, as all major sources are constrained, including tuition fees, auxiliary income, research grants, government subventions, philanthropic donations and concessionary loans. Thirdly, human capital remains deficient,

especially in terms of faculty since African universities are not producing enough graduates with terminal degrees (World Bank, 2018). For example, the University of Liberia established in 1951 had no terminal degree programs up to 2023 (University of Liberia, 2023). Fourthly, research output is low. According to the UNESCO Science Report (2021), compared to the global average of 1.79%, Africa barely devotes 0.59% of its GDP to research and development.

Not surprisingly, it only contributes 1.01% of global spending on research and development, 2.50% of researchers worldwide, and 3.50% of scholarly papers, as opposed to 45.7%, 44.5%, and 48.0%, respectively, for a region like Asia. The whole African continent, with a population of 1.3 billion, produces fewer scholarly publications than Canada (3.60%), with a population of 37.7 million (Annan, 2015). Data for innovative Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) disciplines, such as artificial intelligence androbiotics, biotechnology, energy, materials, and nanoscience are low (Annan, 2015). Fifth, aging infrastructure is a perennial problem. Delay and poor maintenance are normal, and physical academic facilities cannot keep up with increased student enrollment and new academic programs. During COVID-19, underinvestment in electronic infrastructures painfully became evident, causing campuses to close and pushing institutions to change to online operations, service delivery, and teaching, which some were unable to do. Sixth, authoritarianism, internal abnormalities, corruption, and a lack of opportunity for leadership development often undermine the effectiveness of leadership and governance of higher education institutions. Seventh, academic cultures are more complicated, and arguments about fairness, diversity, and inclusion get more heated as university communities become more diverse, and expectations increase (Annan, 2015). Eighth, the performance level and quality of graduates are problematic, as demonstrated by the persistent mismatches between university education and economic needs, leading to high levels of unemployability. Ninth, there is the problem of matching the historical

legacies and contemporary pressures of asymmetrical internationalization and the continuing difficulties of intellectual, institutional, and ideological decolonization and indigenization.

African universities do not score well in international higher education rankings. For example, in the Times Higher Education, 2021 World University Rankings, only 60 African universities are included among the 1,500 listed, led by Egypt with 21, followed by South Africa with 10, Algeria eight, Nigeria six, Morocco and Tunisia five each, and one each for Kenya, Uganda and Ghana. Notwithstanding their problems as instruments of global academic capitalism, rankings have a material impact on the intensifying competition for students, faculty, and resources (World University Ranking, 2021).

Apparently, African colleges are not exempt from the ever-growing harmful aspects of the modern university such as commercialization, certification and unplanned management practices. Students are becoming consumer based and treated more like objects to be bought and sold than as pupils in a classroom. When higher education is commercialized, emphasis is put more on profits and income generation than teaching, learning and the development of people and society. This contravenes the role of education to prepare people to contribute to the social and economic development of the individual and society. Some short-term commercialization strategies emphasize learning certification, which prioritizes short-term vocational education above requiring learning, skills, and attitudes necessary for the total development of the person. Poor management practices, which are norms of modernization, encourage the growth of branded norms of knowledge production and consumption (World University Ranking, 2021). The commercialization of higher education has been taking place all over the world since the beginning of the 1990s. Under the General Agreement on Trade Services (GATS) regime, education was included and has since been viewed as a tradable commodity. According to Gupta (2015), almost

all nations of the world gave in to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank agenda of delivering a policy for trade in higher education as a solution to resolve the crisis in higher education in the era of fiscal constraints. Since then, the commercialization of higher education is being vigorously pursued in both developed and developing countries of the world and has become a government-supported service through widespread privatization and deregulation (Gupta, 2015). This change from student learning to profit-making could affect the quality of education as in the increasing growth of private higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In the case of Liberia and Sierra Leone, higher education institutions mushroomed to meet the increase in explosive student population, prompting higher education commissions to provide opportunities to private individuals to offer educational services. In Liberia, private higher education institutions increased from nine in 2010 to 25 in 2022 (NCHE, 2022). In Sierra Leone, private higher education institutions have also increased from two in 2005 to 10 in 2022 (TECS, 2022).

Mitigation measures for challenges in Public Higher Education Institutions

There are differences between South Asian and African countries yet the similarities of challenges confronting higher education in African and South Asia countries require different approaches to alleviate. In African and Asian countries government funding and low salaries forced faculty of higher education institutions to teach at other institutions to augment low salaries which adversely affect quality output and reduces the amount of time a lecturer spends with individual students. A mitigating factor has been introducing tuition fees in countries that were once tuition free to increase salaries and offset operational costs attracting international students at higher costs, student loans and educational loans as in the case of Bangladesh, and Pakistan, help to subsidize higher education (Tilak, 2015). In low income developing countries, higher education is paid for by public financing, families and students. In some instances, corporations or public actors,

political leaders, and finance the education of individual students. Dilemmas over increasing costs and who should pay have manifested in South Africa, Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Free higher education lacks justification among liberal economists, and governments are advocating entrepreneurial graduates who are job creators (Oketch, 2016). International financing organizations, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the African Development Bank, are increasingly being sought by developing countries to help finance higher education. Government spending on higher education is far behind funding for other development agendas. The African Union, Agenda 2030, The Africa we Want, sets higher education as one of the cardinal pillars for the first ten years to intensify access to increase access to higher education and continuing education in Africa by concurrently reaching a large number of professionals and students in different places and creating high-quality, pertinent Open, Distance, and eLearning (ODEL) resources that will provide prospective students with assurance of entry to the university from anywhere in the world at any time, seven days a week.

(AU Agenda 2030).

A Pan African Institute for Education Development (IPED) oversees the attainment of quality, responsive, and inclusive education in Africa. (African Union Commission, 2013). Without direct funding to higher education institutions, this goal could remain elusive. Access to higher education globally is an essential target of the Sustainable Development Goals. In Africa and South Asia, Ilie & Rose (2016) posit that access to higher education will be stultified unless inequalities in the educational system are addressed at the primary and secondary levels because inequality gaps between rich and poor, men and women remain wide. (ADEA, 2015), and Olson & Rao, (2020) highlighted challenges of gender inequalities in PHEIs in Africa and South Asia. According to the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, ADEA (2015), policy

document, holistic gender responsive strategies are needed to deal with issues of gender inequalities, lack of women leadership, women under representation in sciences, and women's full participation in PHEIs. The increasing enrolment of women in higher education in developing countries are significant, though they account for less than one third of the enrolment in PHEIs and is a consequence of women's desire to excel (Olson-Strom & Rao, 2020). There are marked similarities of administrative challenges in PHEIs in developing countries in existing studies. The differences occur when dealing with administrative challenges in post-conflict societies. Post-conflict developing countries need to leapfrog into the future, utilizing new technologies and approaches to teaching, learning and strategies for advancement. The 21st century presents opportunities for post-conflict developing countries to take a qualitative leap in public higher education administration.

The erroneous representation of Africa as a single unit makes it difficult to deliberate on African educational challenges. Africa is a continent of fifty-four countries, with varying characteristics which makes it is impossible to assume that challenges which exist in one country epitomizes all, especially given their diverse history with colonization which influenced their educational systems.

Administrative challenges of Public Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria

Nigeria, located in West Africa is the seventh most highly populated country in the world with over 190 million people and over 250 ethnic groups and languages including Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba and Fulani. Nigeria has a youthful population with over three fourths of the Nigerian population 30 years old and below. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2022). Nigeria was under British control from 1861 and became a colony in 1914 until 1960 when the Country acclaim its

independence from the United Kingdom and became a Republic in 1963. However, Nigeria's educational history predates its colonial past.

The National Policy on Higher Education in Nigeria (2004) describes higher education as education after secondary schools which includes universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, teachers training, technology and correspondence and all institutions associated with them. The objectives of these institutions are to develop human potential through, among others, intellectual skill acquisition, acculturation, equipping individuals in socio- cultural and economic skills to adapt to the environment (Jacob & Musa, 2020).

Higher education in Nigeria commenced over 73 years after the establishment of the first high school by colonial authorities in 1859 to consider investment in Higher education. Agitation from some nationalists aware of the importance of higher education led to the establishment of Yaba Higher college in Lagos in 1932 to offer post-secondary courses (Otonko, 2012). The Yaba college's objectives were to offer courses in medicine, education, agriculture, engineering arts and sciences to produce qualified people to staff industrial, commercial and government agencies (Ahmed,1989). Yaba College was followed by the establishment of the Ibadan college in 1948. During preparatory work for self-government in British colonized countries in West Africa, Britain believed that the establishment of higher educational institutions would produce citizens with the necessary educational and administrative skills for the new governments.

Consequently, a Ten-Year Plan of Development and Welfare to rebuild its colonies after the destruction, degradation, and economic depression of colonies affected during and after World War II. A 14-member panel was constituted in June 1943 headed by Sir Walter Elliot. This commission was to report on the condition of higher education in the colonies and describe the institutions' organizational structure. Three of these fourteen members were from West African

colonies: the Reverend I. O. Ransome-Kuti, representing Nigeria, K. A. Korsah, representing the Gold Coast (Ghana), and E. H. Taylor, representing Sierra Leone (University of Ibadan, 2022). The Elliot Commission suggested that Nigeria's educational system be strengthened by an increase in the number of instructors, including graduate teachers who would complete a degree program in education, the number of university spaces, number of disciplines offered at universities, the establishment of new institutions, and the administration of these universities. The Elliot Commission also suggested that Nigeria's educational system be improved by training instructors in graduate courses and increasing their wages (University of Ibadan, 2022).

Four other higher education institutions, the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Intramural of Ife, Amado Bello University and the post graduate school of Lagos were added during the period, 1960 to 1963. The primary objectives of these institutions were to trained manpower needs of Nigeria. Historically, the university education in Nigeria commenced in 1948. This followed by establishment of first-generation universities in Nigeria between 1961-1970 (Sulieman et al., 2017). The second-generation universities in Nigeria appeared in the 1970s. Between 1980 – 1990, the third-group universities were established. The last set of universities established by the federal government were between 2011 - 2013. Complementing these federally established universities were also state -owned universities which started in Nigeria in the 1980s and continued today. Since these universities were Federal Government and state owned; the government was relied on for the funding and other administrative matters (Suleiman et al., 2017). However, one of the first challenges which confront Public Higher education institutions in Nigeria is population explosion. Nigeria has over 153 universities with student population of over 2 million which cut across public and private institutions. In 2014, Nigeria had 43 approved federal universities, 47 approved state universities, 75 approved private universities, 28 approved federal polytechnics, 43 approved state

polytechnics, 51 approved polytechnics, 22 approved federal colleges, 47 approved state colleges, and 26 approved private colleges, according to the Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria (NUC, 2020). To boost the number of universities in Nigeria, the Federal Government issued licenses to nine new private institutions in May 2015 (NUC, 2020).

Some of the challenges which affect Nigerian higher education dates to its establishment. After colonial rule in Africa, few countries had any institution of higher learning or universities. Higher education development was stultified until after the second world war due to the disapproval of the creation of the educating and African elite, and the need to quell the Africans' demand for freedom and equality (Zelena, 2016). Consequently, Africans who sought higher education travelled abroad to European universities.

International donor agencies discouraged plans for the development of universities in Africa resulting in serious impact on the development of African Higher education. According to Cloete et al., (2018) in the 1980's the World Bank disapproved of contributions to the development of higher education in favor of primary education. The World Bank argued in a 1986 meeting with vice chancellors of African universities that higher education was not necessarily important for Africa and that it would be better for African nations to shut down their institutions and send their students to study abroad. This position created a negative but lasting impact on the approach to the administration of higher education in many African nations. In most instances, external funding to these institutions was reduced, and many institutions had to close or submit to drives for privatization initiated by the World Bank. These developments from colonialization to present set the stage for the development of public higher education systems in West Africa, with Nigerian being no exception (Cloete et al., 2018).

University education in Nigeria dates to the 1943 Elliot Commission, which preceded the founding of University College Ibadan (UCI) in 1948. Like other universities established during that period, UCI was associated with the University of London. The University College of Ibadan had several disadvantages at its founding, including strict constitutional rules, inadequate personnel, limited enrolment, and a high dropout rate (University of Ibadan, 2022). The Ashby Commission was authorized by the Federal Government of Nigeria in April 1959 to evaluate the higher education requirements of Nigeria for the first two decades. In April 1959, the Federal Government of Nigeria authorized an investigation by the Ashby Commission to assess Nigeria's higher education requirements for its first two decades. Before the Ashby Commission submitted its report, the administration of the Eastern Region created its university in Nsukka, University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1960. The implementation of the Ashby Report resulted in the founding of University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife in 1962 by the Western area, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1962 by the Northern Region, and University of Lagos in 1962 by the Southern Region (Ahmed, 1989).

According to Nigerian National Policy on Education (2004), the goals and objectives of higher education include the development of cultural and value orientation for the survival of individuals and societies, the individual intellectual development to comprehend and appreciate the environment, and gaining physical and intellectual skills, to help individuals to develop into useful community members. Higher education institutions were encouraged by the National Policy on Education (2004), to pursue these goals through instruction, research, the transmission of and stewardship of knowledge and community service. The specific goals of the National Policy on Education are equal access to education, promotion of quality education, promotion of skillful education for job procurement and quality education (National Policy on Education, 2014). The

Nigerian higher education system includes universities, polytechnics and colleges of education offering programs in areas such as teacher education and agriculture. The Nigerian higher education system the largest and most complex in Africa with a total number of over 198 institutions and a network of different constituencies in the system. (Nigeria Universities Commission, 2020).

According to the Nigerian National Policy on Education (2014), higher education institutions are to conduct research related to national development goals and collaborate with government agencies and the international community to conduct research and publish the results. Musa and Joseph, (2022), pointed out the Challenges that affected these universities from inception include poor funding, inadequate infrastructure, over crowdedness, and long and frequent closures due to strike actions. Some of these challenges continue to date.

Tertiary Enrollment in Nigeria

The Federal Ministry of Education in Nigeria (2022) reports a total of 1,274,261 students enrolled in higher education institutions between the year 2012/2013. Of this number 80% were enrolled in Federal and state universities with 20% enrolled in private universities. By 2019 the number of undergraduate students in higher education institutions in Nigeria had grown to 1.8 million with 1.2 million in public institutions and 103, 000 in private institutions (Statista, 2022). The average age of students enrolling in Nigerian higher education institutions in 2015 was 17.9 years, which made it difficult for the higher education system to cope (Nigeria National Education Commission, 2022). During the 2018- 2019 academic year, Nigerian institutions had around 1.8 million undergraduate students and 242,000 post graduate students.

With this number of students in tertiary education, public higher education institutions in Nigeria are pressurized to provide education for most of these students. However, the current trends in

higher education delivery cast aspersions on educational quality, delivery, completion rates and availability of resources. Additionally, the country's tertiary education institutions' service delivery is entangled in several paradoxes that put doubt on access, equity, and quality (Akpan, 2013).

Though the Nigerian Government has made significant investments in higher education, results have not improved, and the Federal Education Ministry has branded the situation as a national emergency. This is due to the enormous challenges developing countries face in developing their tertiary education systems, ranging from increasing access to and quality of education to strengthening tertiary education to produce a critical mass capable of capitalizing on the technological innovation of the present day. There is a significant gap between what is taught, and the capabilities required by employers. This leads to many school leavers and graduates being unprepared to compete in the labor market and produces a skill gap in several areas (World Bank, 2006). This is due largely to reactive initiatives for skill development which do not target anticipated growth areas. An examination of the current condition of affairs reveals a multitude of obstacles, voids, and indifference, especially toward the public tertiary institutions (Moji & Adenuga, 2020).

Higher education Challenges in Nigeria

Many scholars, such as Salako (2014), Solomon et al., (2020) and Musa, (2022) have maintained that the challenges facing Nigerian higher education are inadequate planning, poor administration, inadequate funding, academic staff, and infrastructures, strike actions, brain drain and corruption. Public higher education institutions experience most of the problems because they absorb more students than private higher education institutions of learning. Ogunode and Musa (2020) cited other challenges as brain drain, academic corruption, poor infrastructural facilities, manpower shortage and frequent interruption in the academic schedules. Salako (2014, Solomon

et al., (2020), Musa, (2022) and Ogunode and Musa, (2020), in their views believed that the inadequacy of infrastructural facilities accounts for poor quality education at the tertiary level which affects teaching and learning. According to Adejompo (2017), the condition of the learning environment has a direct impact on the academic performance and effectiveness of students.

Funding Public Higher Education in Nigeria

Public funding of education is justified by the goal of equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge, abilities, and skills to enhance their productivity, quality of life, and ability to learn new skills and information to generate and participate in educational processes.

Public sector funding of education in Nigeria is based on the belief that young people must be provided the knowledge and skills for national development. The greatest challenge to the management of university education in Nigeria is the continuous lack of funds. The federal and state governments of Nigeria are the main sources of funding for federal or state-owned universities. Even though the United Nations standard for funding education globally is 26% of national Gross National Product, (GNP), Nigeria has provided less than 7% of its national budget to support education. Comparatively, smaller African countries have invested more on education than Nigeria. For example, Nigeria spends only 5.39% of its annual budget on education. In 2020, Sierra Leone 's contribution to education was 34. 24 % of its annual budget while Liberia was 14% (World Bank Data, 2020).

Funding has always been a major point of controversy between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU). ASUU has always insisted on the minimum of 26% of the National budget as contribution to education which conforms to the United Nations standard. The Government of Nigeria believes such standard is not feasible now. Under-funding has affected the provision of the facilities and conditions required to sustain quality

education in Nigeria (Okorma, 2009). Students in Public higher education institutions have their fees subsidized by the government. Except for administrative and educational charges, students are not required to pay tuition fees in federal universities, polytechnics, and colleges. The Government subsidizes education for an estimated 45% of the students (National Higher Education Equity Policy, 2018). However, funding is far from adequate. Instead of increasing funding to correspond to the student population growth, budgetary allotments are reducing. For example, according to Wahab (2022), in 2016, out of the total budget of 6.06 trillion Naira or 7.6 billion United States dollars, N369.6 billion Naira 6.7% was allocated to public education. In 2017, the figure went up to 7.38 % and was reduced to 7.04% in 2018. In 2019, N620 bn or 7.05% was allocated to education out of the budget of N8.92 trillion, and in 2020, N671.07 billion naira or 6.7% was given to education out of N10.33 trillion Naira budget (Wahab, 2022).

Musa & Jacob, (2022) assert the problems in Nigerian higher education institutions commenced with the government's interference in higher education administration and management. The inadequate funding of higher education has culminated in offshoots of problems. Victoria & Owuama (2016), Ogunode (2020), and Okani et al., (2021) posited that the low funding of public institutions in Nigeria is attributable to a lack of political will, which results in insufficient infrastructural amenities, shortage of academic staff and poor quality of education and ultimately strike actions. These challenges are exacerbated by academic corruption, population growth, inflation, a decline in national revenue, and poor financial planning.

Quality Assurance in Public Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria

Quality assurance in Nigerian Universities is influenced by numerous factors such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructures strike actions, weak supervision and poor staff development (Monsurat & Musa, 2021). However, institutions of higher learning in every country

are shaped by national objectives, expectations and standards. In the case of Nigeria, to ensure quality in Public higher institutions of learning, the federal Government of Nigeria instituted several bodies to oversee them, such as the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE).

The National Universities Commission was established to monitor teaching and learning in Nigerian Universities. The National Universities Commission (NUC), and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) are to monitor teaching and learning in technical and polytechnic institutions (Monserrat & Musa, 2021). The National Policy on Education stipulates that higher education institutions should strive to develop physical, intellectual and individual skills to make people useful to society (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2014). The National Universities Commission, NUC, among several other functions, coordinates all activities of universities in Nigeria in keeping with national development goals and advises the Nigerian Government on financial requirements of the institutions. These objectives are not easily met due to a plethora of problems confronting higher education institutions. An overarching challenge is the falling standard of higher education, evidenced by the characteristics of the products from these institutions and their inability to be absorbed into the job market (Monsurat & Musa, 2021).

Several policies on quality assurance in public tertiary institutions have been instituted to ensure quality in Nigerian higher education of learning institutions but implementation is a major challenge. According to Ahaotu and Ogunode (2021) minimum criteria for teacher-student radio of 1:20 exceeds all stipulated benchmarks and impedes the quality of higher education. Additionally, other concerns such as poor and inadequate infrastructures, funding, and facilities, such as residential halls, classroom facilities, laboratories, and equipment for teaching and learning, are intrinsically connected to quality education delivery (Monsurat & Musa, 2021).

Research in Nigerian Higher Education

Higher education institutions must conduct research for a variety of purposes, including the advancement of knowledge and the enhancement of the institution's reputation (Mafenya, 2014). Globally, higher education institutions continue to place a strong priority on research (Nwakpa, 2015). Undeniably, conducting research is a crucial academic duty and an essential component of career growth (Turk & Ledi 2016). Therefore, there is a greater need for nations all over the world to increase their research and knowledge creation (Kearney, 2008).

Higher education research in Nigeria is not different from institutions in underdeveloped and developing nations. Research in Nigerian higher education institutions faced difficulties in quality and relevance compared to other institutions around the world (Kearney, 2008). Desmennu and Owoaje (2017) and Nwakpa, (2015) hold the view that the standards of conducting research in Nigerian universities is low compared to other countries due to social environment, facilities, and the academic structures. Another challenge is funding, which is essential to support research activities. Kyaligon et al. (2015) state funding research in public and private universities in sub-Saharan Africa has always been a challenge. However, Teferra (2013) opined that funding challenges for research exist everywhere, including industrialized countries, but in Africa the challenge is more evident. This is mainly because Nigerian universities do not receive adequate funding since the criteria set for receiving funding are difficult to attain. This has serious bearings on research-related activities tied to institutional rankings.

According to Mba (2019) only two Nigerian universities were recorded in the top one thousand by the Time Higher Education world university rankings in 2019. Rankings of other Sub-Saharan West African countries are more discouraging. Financial support from the Nigerian Government to research activities of public higher education institutions is from the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) (Ibrahim, 2017; Oraka et al., 2017). Additionally, some

authorities responsible for disbursing monies from the TETFund do not remit the same to researchers after research approvals are obtained (Aina et al., 2021).

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund, (TETFund), in Nigeria was initially established as Education Trust Fund (ETF) by the 1993 Act No 7 which was amended in 1998 by Act No 40 of and subsequently amended and replaced by Tertiary Education Trust Fund Act 2011. It is established to offer extra support to all levels of public higher institutions of learning to use the funds for the management of restoration and strengthening of Tertiary Education in Nigeria. The primary objectives of the TETFund are to provide funds for the development of educational facilities and infrastructure, stimulate innovative and creative and educational approaches to teaching and learning, improve practices of teaching and learning and illiteracy (TETFund 2022). The fund is an intermediary institution also charged with the responsibility to guarantee that funds are provided to meet objectives of public higher institutions of learning and ensure they can compete with similar institutions in Africa. Consequently, distribution and monitoring of the TETFund is inherent in its mandate. According to Oyeike and Eseyin, (2014), the main responsibilities of the TETFund are funding, staff training and development and projects facilitation.

To support the TETFund the Nigerian Government legislated that a two percent education tax be paid from the assessable profit of companies registered in Nigeria. The Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) assesses and collects the tax for the TETFund and disburses it for educational improvement (TETFund, 2021). The TETFund is generally used for Physical Infrastructure, instructional materials, Research and Publications, academic Staff Training and Development and other needs as approved by the Board of Trustees (TETFund, 2022). However, the fund has experienced challenges of clear definition of responsibilities, effective financial and

project monitoring, Government interference, poor capacity to use funds, inexperienced administrators and low faculty morale (Oyeike & Eseyin, 2014).

Since the late 1980's granting Nigerian higher education institutions autonomy has been a problematic issue. The passage of the Educational Minimum Standard Act known as decree no 16, gave the rights to the National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), and the National Commission for Colleges of Education, (NCCE), to set criteria for higher education institutions (FRN, 2013). The NCCE supervises all non–degree teacher education and professionalism of teachers in Nigeria. The Minimum Standard Act raise issues of conditions of service and salaries in 1989 and 1991 which still plagues higher education in Nigeria today. The contentions over these issues persist and do not support a conducive environment for research and innovation to develop.

However, due to the importance of research for socio economic development, the Nigerian government established the Nigerian Educational Research and Development council, NERDC as a research arm of the Nigerian Educational System responsible, among other things, for educational research for policy study (NERDC, 2022). NERDC's objective is to be a regional Center of Excellence in Educational Research and Development and grow to international standards by 2015 (NERDC, 2022).

Research institutes exist in public tertiary institutions and play pivotal roles in the socioeconomic development of Nigeria. Some of these research bodies are the international institute of tropical Agriculture, Veterinary Research Institute Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm research and the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research. Public higher education institutions make it mandatory promotional criterium for faculty to conduct research and publish their findings. Compared to other institutions of learning in developed countries, research in public

higher education institutions is not robust due to a lack of funding, yet the bulk of educational research is conducted by universities (Ighalo & Ighalo, 2018). But research in Nigerian higher education institutions has changed significantly over the years because of information technology, globalization, the quest for academic excellence, and innovation. Nigeria has a high potential for the conduct of research in higher institutions of learning, with over 200 universities and 60,000 academic staff, but the research output is not equal to the staff. However, Nigerian public higher education institutions' research output far exceeds the research activities of other public education institutions in West Africa.

Strike Actions in Nigerian Public Higher Education Institutions

Nigerian higher education system is rife with strike actions, which have various ramifications. Constant strike actions by the Academic staff. Different union organizations went on strike due to underfunding of public institutions, inadequate infrastructure facilities, poor execution of agreements with union groups, and poor working conditions. Ogunode (2020). Higher education in Nigeria is unstable due to the Academic Staff Union of Universities, (ASUU), and Non - Academic Staff Union (NASU) strikes, students' elections, social crises, increases in school fees, cult wars, national programs, and public vacations. This makes it difficult to program academic calendars, leading to poorly prepared graduates, inadequate coverage of the curriculum, waste of resources, student engagement in criminal activities, and extended graduation periods for students. Lawal and Ogunode (2020) complained about the effects of strikes on Nigerian universities, citing an unstable curriculum, a decline in educational quality, and capital flight because of students having to study abroad, exposing Nigerian students to foreign cultures, a migration of talent, socially undesirable behavior, and a waste of educational resources.

Ogunode (2020) indicated that the consequences of the repeated strike actions on public universities disrupted the academic program causing poor standards of education, a negative representation of the institutions, a low worldwide ranking, and patronage of public universities in Nigeria. Ogunode et al. (2022) noted that strike activities in Nigerian higher education institutions resulted to the suspension of teaching and research programs, community service, and accreditation program of the various higher education institutions. These strike actions also have a negative effect on internally generated revenue (Ogunode et al., 2022).

The top four unions in Nigeria's public universities are Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Senior Staff Association of Nigeria, (SSANU), National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT) and Non-Academic Staff Union of Universities (NASU). While NAAT provides students with technical education services, SSANU and NASU oversee school administration as non-academic employees. There are records of protracted and short-term strikes dating back to the founding of ASSU which has a national administration that negotiates on behalf of state and federally owned universities under an agreement by the Union and Governments. But before going on strike, governments are always asked to resolve demands or concerns which are frequently ignored and cause the union to lay down their tools (Chukwudi & Idowu, 2021).

Since the establishment of ASUU in 1978 as an authority of all academics in Nigerian universities to further socio -economic wellbeing of its members, several agreements have been signed between the ASUU and Federal Government (ASUU, 2022). Successive agreements were signed in 1992,1999, 2001 2009, and 2022, respectively. The ASUU was engaged in numerous interactions during the military regime of the 1980's. In 1988 a National Strike to acquire fair wages and university autonomy was organized. As a result, the ASUU was banned on 7th August 1988 and all its property seized. ASUU was allowed to resume in 1990 but banned on 23rd August

1992 after another strike action (Nwakpa, 2015). In 1994 and 1996, the Academic Staff Union of Universities organized an industrial action throughout Nigeria, which lasted for more than one year. That strike action was called over good working conditions and the dismissal of staff. In 1999, ASUU went on a nationwide strike, which lasted for five months before it ended. Other strike actions were instituted in 2001, 2002, and 2009 to obtain better working conditions and revised salary structures, which lasted for three and six months respectively (Doublegist, 2013). Between 1998 and 2022, there were 16 strike actions (ASUU,2022). When the 2009 agreement between the ASUU and the Federal Republic of Nigeria was not implemented by 2010, in the southeast states, ASUU embarked on a five-month strike. Similar actions continued in August 2011 and June 2013 when ASUU started a national strike, which lasted nine months, to force compliance of the 2009 FG-ASUU agreement and revitalization of Nigerian universities, which was not implemented (ASUU, 2022). Strike actions, occasioned by a breach in agreements between the ASUU and the Nigerian Government, threaten the objectives for which public institutions of higher learning were established, particularly the training of the workforce for Nigeria's development. To force compliance with their demands, the ASUU engaged in strike actions in 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2022 respectively (ASUU, 2022).

Academic programs at higher institutions of learning are disrupted when the demands of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Non-Academic Staff Union, (NASU) are not met by the Government. In most cases, these demands are for salary increments and the revitalization of programs at the universities. The strike action in 2022 in demand for salary increments and better working conditions lasted for eight months. Disruption in academic programs because of strike action produces disappointment, frustration, emotional and psychological stress, ill-preparedness on the part of students, and a lack of interest, which results

in a non-conducive environment for successful learning. Nigerian universities are in a state that hinders human development and negatively affects students (Ogbette et al., 2017).

Unpredictable Academic Calendar for Public Higher Education Institutions in Nigeria

One persistent administrative challenge facing public higher education institutions is the unreliable academic calendar. This unpredictability is caused by intermittent and prolonged strike actions because of problems with the Federal Government over poor conditions of service, which affect quality of education delivery and infrastructural improvements (Ogunode & Musa, 2020). The latest strike by the Academic staff Union of Universities (ASUU) commenced in February 2022 and lasted until December 2022, affecting delays in the academic calendar. The strike, the ninth in thirteen years was called over the Nigerian Government inability to adequately fund public tertiary institutions but demands by the Union has never been fully met (ASUU, 2022).

An earlier nine-month strike in 2020, ended after the government agreed to manage the issues but reneged, leading to another strike in 2022 after several warnings. The Government sued the Union and obtained an order to have lecturers resume duties, which was ignored. The ruling cited the inability of most students to afford the prohibitive cost of education charged by private Universities. These constant strike actions have destroyed public confidence in the higher education system, delaying students' completion schedules.

Higher Education Reforms

Educational reforms are introduced when current practices are questioned, and practices challenged. This requires a more resourceful and competent way to achieve educational objectives or change the way things are done to achieve the same results. Reforms come about when it is recognized that the current system cannot achieve the set goals, and the old system needs to be changed for a more effective and acceptable one. In Nigeria, reforms have been sought since the

inception of public higher institutions of learning. These reforms have manifested in policy guidelines, implementation strategies and demands. After over 37 years of independence, Nigerians realized that the political, economic and social performance of their country fell far below anticipated expectation despite the abundance of resources leading to development of new policy documents on tertiary education.

The National Policies on University Education

The Nigerian policy on university education defined tertiary or higher education as education provided after high school in Universities, Colleges and Polytechnics. The goals of higher education included, among others, contributing to national development through workforce training, developing and instructing, developing and instilling values for survival, developing individual intellectual capabilities for self-reliance and usefulness in society. Public and private higher institutions of learning were to attain these goals through teaching, research and development, staff enrichment program and improvement in academic standards (Vision 2010).

The Nigerian Vision, 2010 plan laid the blueprint to accomplish development in education, health, industry, petroleum, solid minerals, agriculture, infrastructure, poverty alleviation, rural and urban development, among others (Vision 2010). The vision targeted 26% of the national budget for education by the year 2010. However great these objectives were, implementation posed further challenges such as inadequate funding and facilities, poor conditions of service and student explosion (Okoroma, 2009). The greatest challenge to higher education governance in Nigeria is inadequate funding which occurs annually. The Governments (Federal and State) are the main sources of funding for federal and state universities.

Comparative spending on tertiary education by national governments still show Nigeria lingering behind other countries. A major point of controversy between the Federal Government

of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has persistently been on the problem of funding. ASUU has always insisted that a minimum of 20% of the National budget be provided to education, which is the UN standard. The objective of the third Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) is to guarantee equal access to high-quality, affordable technical, vocational, and postsecondary education, including university-level education, for all women and men by 2030. According to UNESCO's Higher Education Global Data Report (2022), on admission to   Higher Education, over 235 million students were enrolled in higher education in the world in 2020, more than doubling the one hundred million students enrolled in 2000 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021).

The overall higher education enrolment ratio reached 40% globally in 2020, with only 9% in Sub-Saharan Africa (UIS database,2021). About a third of enrolment worldwide is estimated to be in private HEIs, and two-thirds, or 60% in public HEIs. The enrolment in private HEIs ranges from about 15% in Oceania to 54% in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO, 2021). The number and size of HEIs are based on a dataset of 55 countries, indicating that the number of HEIs grew by 52% between 2006 and 2018.

Underfunding has affected the provision of the facilities required to maintain quality education in Nigeria. Yet Nigeria Vision 2010 aimed to have 26% of Nigeria's budget allocated to education (Vision 2010). This objective was not accomplished, leading to the current crisis of incessant strike actions and demand for better working conditions for university lecturers in Nigeria. Education reforms have centered on training Nigerian tertiary education graduates to make them more productive to support national development goals by making them employable and marketable as the country forges ahead in as one of the top economies of the 2020's (Eneh & Owo, 2015). More recent higher education policy reforms of 2020 centered around issues of access,

affordability and the needs of society. Enoch and Owo (2015) state tertiary education should be operationally entrepreneurial, sensitive to the needs of people and the country by providing access to all eligible students to receive degrees at various levels. Vision 2020 is one of the most outstanding policy documents on education since Nigeria's independence because it visualizes a wealthy Nigeria capable of emerging from its current state through hard work into a country with high productivity, entrepreneurship, sound values, and poverty alleviation. Vision 2020 had twenty-nine pillars for Nigeria's economy, which include education. This vision succeeded in other development policy documents, which had education as a cardinal objective because every aspect of human development begins with training. Sanubi and Akpotu, (2015) stated that real quality education must engage other sectors of society and the education that stimulates development is that which is well-funded, with requisite facilities, supported by motivation.

Nigerian reform policies for higher education are commendable, though implementation is problematic. Since the sanctioning of Vision 2020 , the Ministry of Education has the responsibility to standardize the functions of higher education institutions and ensure the implementation of policies. Vision 2020 aimed at using human and material resources efficiently to achieve economic growth (Vision 2020). More funding is needed for educational improvements than just policy declarations. The execution of changes in education requires financing, oversight, and assessment. More funding is needed for educational improvements than just policy declarations. Reform execution requires financing, oversight, and assessment.

Free Public Higher Education in Nigeria

The system of free higher education in Nigeria dates to the introduction of Western and missionary education systems in Nigeria before independence. Missionaries used education for evangelization while colonial masters viewed education to prepare low-grade personnel to serve

the system (Olatunji, 2018). After independence, the education system devolved to state actors to build and operate schools. Free education commenced with primary schools and was made mandatory later for all levels by constitutional provision. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Section 18(3) states the Nigerian government must work to reduce illiteracy by offering compulsory, free education at the primary, high school and university levels, while simultaneously establishing adult literacy programs. Despite constitutional provisions, the Nigerian Government remained more committed to free basic and primary education than higher education through its enactment of the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004 and the National Policy on Education of 2013 (Olatunji, 2018). Support for students of Public Higher Education Institutions, under the free education policy, is provided for under the Ministry of Education through various agencies established for this purpose, such as the TETFund (Olatunji, 2018).

In negotiations with the Academic Staff Union of Universities, the Nigerian Government proposed tuition fees of one million naira for university students, which was rejected. The Government plan was to open a bank for education, which would provide students loan of one million naira annually at a rate of five percent, payable after graduation (Deji-Foliole, 2021). However, the issue of levying tuition on University students is sticky, and no administrator wants to deal with the backlash such a decision engenders. The Government, ASUU, and student unions avoid any discussions on tuition fees, which the government announced free over 60 years ago.

What is apparent is that free tuition for public higher education institutions in Nigeria is not working. The federal government finds it difficult to continue the necessary increase in educational funding to meet high demands for facilities, research, and student enrollment. In 2020, funding for education decreased by seven billion naira. Nigeria has the largest black population globally which, according to 2024 figures, was more than 227 million people. Consequently, there

are large numbers of youths entering universities. In 2018, the Joint Admissions Matriculation Board, (JAMP) registered 1.6 million students for entrance examinations for Nigerian universities. Yet, there are always more applicants than existing admission spaces (Deji- Folutile, 2021).

Most Nigerian youths get their education from federal and state-owned public universities. Currently, a minute portion of secondary school leavers opt to attend private owned universities because public universities have lower tuition fees. Public Higher education institutions are cheaper and tuition costs, infrastructural developments, faculty and staff salaries are largely funded by the Federal Government of Nigeria. However, funding higher education is more difficult than primary or basic education (Edeagu, 2019). For example, access to higher education is not and cannot be universal. Admittance to higher education institutions requires meeting basic requirements such as acquiring the requisite scores on the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Entrance, (WASSCE) and Jamb exams. Students who do not meet these standards are denied access to higher education, not only in Nigeria but in West Africa.

Ironically, statistics show that majority of the students who enter public higher education institutions in Nigeria are from private secondary schools and middle-income families, a situation which calls into question the issue of government funding for public education, since tuition at private secondary education is far higher in costs than public higher education. Tuition fees are free for students in Nigerian higher education institutions who only pay meager fees for tuition and other charges. Edeagu, (2019) disclosed that payment of tuition fees in public higher education institutions is based on student loans, and diversification of funding sources from alumni, non-governmental organizations and philanthropists. Funding higher education requires more than good will. Inadequate funding of Higher education has implications for quality education delivery, increase accessibility to education and subsequently poorly prepared workforce to meet national

development needs. This raises a fundamental issue of whether free tertiary education should continue in Nigeria at the expense of socio-economic benefits or the revaluation of the policy of free tertiary education. Nigerian universities' difficulties have gotten worse over time. This is due to the rapid growth of Nigeria's youth population and increased competition for spaces in overcrowded institutions. Because university education is commonly regarded as a ticket to social and economic mobility, demand for, and enrollment in university places has skyrocketed in the last decade (Edeagu, (2019). Three areas which require keen attention are government funding, reviewing and revising the curricula and tertiary institutions that generated funds to augment government subvention. The curricula of higher education institutions need to be revamped to produce graduates who are more prepared for the realities of the national economy. Currently, the economy cannot provide more formal jobs; it requires job creators. Finally, colleges must generate their own revenue to support their mission for teaching, research and community service providers and contributors to the economy (Edeagu, 2019).

Administrative Challenges of Public Higher Institutions in Ghana

The University College of the Gold Coast, forerunner of the University of Ghana, was established in 1948 after a body setup to explore higher education in the British colonies. The Asquith commission set up to perform this task recommended the setting up of universities in former British colonies with links to the University of London (University of Ghana Website, 2022). As a follow up another commission, the Elliott commission, the same commission which brought the University of Ibadan into being, recommended the setting up of two colleges in the Gold Coast and Nigeria respectively after the authorities in the Gold Coast refused to accept the establishment of a university in Ibadan, Nigeria to serve all British colonies in West Africa.

The University College of the Gold Coast was founded in 1948 to provide higher education and conduct research. From its inception, the University offered courses for external examinations under the aegis the London University. Under this arrangement, the University College of the Gold Coast could modify courses to suit local conditions, but degrees awarded were from the University of London (University of Ghana, 2022). In compliance with the recommendation of the Asquith Commission, a University Council was established to advise on issues of higher education in Ghana. The University College of Gold Coast was transformed to the University of Ghana in 1961 by an Act of Parliament. Ghana inherited the British System of Higher education targeted to train people in sub- Saharan British colonies for jobs in the civil service to replace expatriates (MOE, 2008).

The evolution of education in Ghana is inextricably linked to the socio-political developments from colonial times to the present. The restructuring procedures have resulted in the expansion of the education system from the first castle schools which only focused on populations associated with the early missionaries, colonialists, and adventurers, social, economic, and religious interests instead of extending conventional education across the country through access to free schooling, the inclusion of technical and vocational education, and improved teacher training. Major areas of development in education in Ghana are embedded in the Education Strategic Plan 2010 to 2020. The Strategic plan listed challenges in the educational system, which required access, management, quality, technology, and science (Ghana-Education-Strategic-Plan-2010-2020, 2020). Based on the Education Strategic Plan 2010 to 2020, Public Higher education institutions in Ghana face general challenges like maintenance and upgrading of infrastructures and academic facilities, maintaining academic staff standards, dealing with increased student

demands and promoting public sector involvement and support for the institutions to reduce public funding.

Access to Higher Education in Ghana

In Ghana and other West African countries, the incessant quest for higher education gave rise to the expansion of higher education institutions and student population increases which are not congruent to plans for inclusion. Higher education institutions in Ghana, like elsewhere, are expected to provide access to quality, affordable education to all to prepare them for participation in the workforce locally and internationally. Despite an increasing number of competent students who complete secondary school, access to higher education in Ghana remains limited. Access to higher education is hampered by a lack of academic resources, restricted family economic means, and national examinations that set the standards too high for student's success. In Ghana's higher education system, a lack of economic opportunity and inequality have also resulted to youth unemployment (Osei-Owusu & Awunyo- Vitor, 2012). Furthermore, the current higher education system in Ghana leads to inequitable participation based on economic disadvantages for an increasing number of qualified students from impoverished school districts, including qualified students from Ghana's rural areas since the quality and location of the school define performance (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah) (2013).

Ghana stands out from other Sub-Saharan African (SSA) nations in terms of the expansion of higher education. Tertiary education in Ghana expanded over the last ten years with increasing access and participation, development of academic facilities, a rapidly increasing private sector, and most importantly, an innovative policy climate. However, encouraging these developments are, there are still inequities in Ghana's higher education system, such as not expanding access to all social classes. Data available indicate unequal participation among women, minorities, people

from low socio-economic backgrounds, and geographic inconsistencies (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah 2013).

Higher education systems in Ghana adopted the British model of residential education for public higher education institutions. Admission is conditioned on how much space is available to accommodate students academically and residentially coupled with the amounts of funds the government provides the institution. As a result, many higher education institutions are filled beyond their abilities while many academically qualified students are not admitted (Atuahene & Ansah, 2013). Accessibility to higher education institutions is a problem most countries face globally, not only Ghana. However, in Ghana the expansion of the higher education institutions has not benefited all Ghanaians proportionately. Atuahene and Ansah, (2013) and Morley et al. (2010) stated that gender disparity, socio economic statuses of families deep spatial and geographic inequalities. Access to higher education is also determined by the high school attended and its location, since urban high schools tend to be more fully equipped than rural ones. Atuahene and Ansah, (2013) state that 70% of all students in public higher education institutions in Ghana emanated from three of Ghana's 16 regions, Greater Accra, Ashanti and Eastern regions which indicates that students from these regions have better opportunities of entering higher education institutions (Atuahene & Ansah, 2013).

Socioeconomic situation is one reason Ghanaian students do not complete high school and enter universities. Primary education in Ghana is tuition-free free but there are other incidental charges which are difficult for students from poorer backgrounds to obtain. Policy interventions to address extra charges are available through the Capitation Grant Program announced in 2005 (Akyeampong, 2011). The Capitation Grant Program was adopted in Ghana to make education accessible to all and meet the Millennium Development Goal, (MDG) of free basic education by

the year 2015. The Ghanaian Government pays all expenses for learning materials such as textbooks, stationery, office materials, maintenance costs, sports, maintenance and machinery to guarantee basic education is free. This subsidy is paid by the Government for each registered student per semester. The MDGs did make significant gains in some target poverty areas like improved health, access to safe drinking water, and minimizing gender disparities but fell short of achieving inclusive equitable universal primary education.

Since most African countries did not achieve the targets of the Millennium Development Goals some of the pillars were carried over to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) propelled by the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Transforming our World. Goal four of the SDG states education must be free for all, and everyone should be able to have lifelong learning skills of literacy and numeracy to contribute to societal development by the year 2030. Despite the concurrence of African member states of the United Nations to meet this target, most countries are far from achieving it. African governments and donor agencies have paid less attention to post-secondary education in Africa, resulting to limited access for students from rural areas, poor quality education, infrastructure, and poorly prepared teachers (Watkins, 2016).

The delivery of good-quality secondary education is essential for equal access to higher education. Ghana is one of the few countries that attained a high success rate and dared to launch a free senior secondary education policy (Chaimbe & Danquah, 2021). In 2017, the Ghanaian Government introduced a Free Senior High School policy (Free SHS Ghana, 2018) to reduce the cost of education. Under this policy, each Ghanaian Senior Secondary student who scores a pass mark set forth by the Ghanaian Education Service receives a three-year scholarship to complete secondary school. The policy is making education accessible to all. Free secondary education entails free tuition, books, examination, laboratory, library and ICT fees, meals and

accommodation (Free SHS Ghana, 2018). Since 2017, The Ghanaian Government made it mandatory for Ghanaian students aged eleven to fourteen to attend school for eleven years. This mandate for basic and secondary education was extended, making it compulsory for all students to attain free education up to the secondary level. In 2020, over four hundred thousand students were enrolled in the Free education system (Statistica, 2022). The free education system has ramifications for access to higher education institutions in Ghana with the clamoring for enrollment in higher education. For example, in 2020, gross enrollment ration in Ghanaian education system for secondary and tertiary education were 103, 44, 77.67, and 550,000 students respectively with more than half of these students enrolled in public higher education institutions (Sasu, 2022).

Prior to the implementation of free Secondary High School education, the heads of endowed schools arbitrarily and independently imposed high personal cut-off grade points and entrance standards to recruit only the extraordinarily good and talented outstanding urban students at the expense of rural students with lower grades. Some parents travelled long distances to enroll their children in a school. In some cases, wards were placed in secondary schools but were unable to attend because of financial difficulties encountered by high school fees which hindered the average Ghanaian child's ability to attend secondary school and progress to higher education and contribute to the nation's human capital development (Kwegyiriba & Osei -Mensah, 2021).

The Ghanaian education system continues to undergo reforms, but factors affecting basic and secondary education have consequences for access to higher education institutions. Higher education policy reforms in Ghana have been instituted by various governments based on policies of their respective political parties, indicating a deficiency in national education reform policy. According to Poku et al., (2013) the direction of education in Ghana is determined by the

government in power which is counter effective because these decisions are influenced by political affiliation and ethnicity. Consequently, these reforms have not been able to fully address the disconnect between the graduates of higher education institutions and the requirements of the job market.

The Quality of Education in Ghana's Public Higher Education Institutions

Quality higher education is a concern for countries all over the world. Higher education institutions are expected to provide standards that meet the expectations of stakeholders by ensuring quality higher education and accountability to meet labor demands. In many countries, institutions are set up to regulate and maintain high standards in higher institutions of learning. Seniwoliba (2014) defined quality in higher education as the ability of institutions to meet and adapt to generally acceptable standards. These requirements are in line with the goals, objectives, and teaching staff competencies of the institutions, as well as the teaching and learning environment and the employability of graduates (Seniwoliba, 2014). Defining quality in higher education is difficult because, as espoused by some scholars, quality can be described in relative terms depending on the perspectives, context, and fitness of purpose and applicability (Doherty (2008) Mishra (2007) & Miteru, (2007). However, numerous conditions affect quality in higher education including the teaching and learning environment, competencies of the teaching staff, assessment requirements, teaching materials, laboratories, libraries, competencies for employment, scholarship, institutional governance, leadership and sometimes the vision and goals.

The quality of higher education also has serious implications for national development to the extent that the United Nations and African Union has enshrined in their organizations bodies to regulate tertiary education in Africa. Ghana cognizant of this need established the National

Accreditation Board and the National Tertiary Education Commission regulate standards in Higher education and standardize quality in higher institutions of learning. Quality assurance is a planned and systematic evaluation of an institution or program to determine whether acceptable educational standards scholarship and infrastructural requirements are met, maintained, and improved (Hayward, 2001). A higher education institution is only as good as its teaching staff, because they produce graduates, determine research results, and provide service to the institution, community, and country.

According to Seniwoliba (2014), the quality assurance system in higher education refers to the method by which the institution provides confidence to both internal and external clients (workers, students) and ensures that all criteria are met to achieve the assumed standards. It can be characterized as a set of policies, procedures, and processes aimed at maintaining and improving educational quality, with a constant assessment and comparison of intended and realized results to identify causes of dysfunctional activity. The following are some of the definitions of quality in higher education: Fitness for purpose describes the extent to which colleges can meet their criteria and carry out their stated or implied mission. This requires the existence of mechanisms at the university level to ensure consistent accomplishments of aims, within the framework of its proclaimed purpose of expressing and assessing perfection. This concept recognizes both the variety of imagined missions in higher education and their significance in general education. In sub-Saharan African Countries, quality assurance units in tertiary institutions are a novelty. According to Miteru (2007), quality assurance is based on the realization of the powerful role of higher education and its expansion and growth. A major challenge confronting African countries is dealing with the increasing demand for higher education and ensuring quality within the context

of socio-economic, political, and financial difficulties. A critical concern becomes how to manage quality in higher education institutions.

Ghana, like most countries, recognized the need for quality assurance practices in higher education institutions and established professional bodies to achieve this. This recognition of the importance of higher education led the Government of Ghana to establish a National Accreditation Board (NAB) within the Ministry of Education. The National Accreditation Board was established by an Act of the Ghanaian Parliament in 1993. The NAB is responsible to ensure quality assurance in and promote the improved management of Ghanaian higher education. The NAB was also charged with the responsibility to publish the list of accredited institutions and advise the President of Ghana. In 2020, the NAB was merged with the National Council for Tertiary Education to become the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, GTEC (GTEC 2022). The GTEC is responsible for regulating all forms of tertiary education and promoting efficient and effective administration and accreditation of tertiary education institutions, principles of the provision of consistent quality of service by tertiary institutions, advancement and application of knowledge through teaching, scholarly research, and collaboration with industry and public sector, and the development of appropriate human capital for the sustainable advancement of the national economy. (GTEC, 2022). To achieve these objectives, the GTEC, (2022) is to ensure that all higher education institutions implement the best standards possible and that teaching, learning, and research programs and outcomes are pertinent.

However notable these objectives are, there are shortcomings in the system that limits quality in Ghanaian public higher education. Alabi et al. (2021) assert that the National Accreditation Board did not set guidelines for the measurement of quality assurance, leaving individual institutions to determine those for themselves. Clear-cut performance indicators to measure

performance were also not available. Because of public demands for quality service, higher education institutions must adopt innovative approaches by integrating quality assurance strategies into overall managerial functions. Taking higher education institutions as a body, society serves as the clientele for the direction of quality education. A vibrant quality assurance system is one way to ascertain confidence in the higher education system. Since the principal beneficiaries of quality higher education are students, their evaluation of provided services is one instrument used to promote quality assurance (Stralman, 2012).

Public higher education institutions in Ghana improved upon prescribed standards of NAB and NCTE, to create their own inhouse quality assurance policies for the provision of quality services (Seniwoliba, 2014). The Academic Quality Assurance Unit (AQAU) at the University of Ghana supervises academic quality in degree-granting academic units, institutions, and programs, ensures compliance with established standards, and recommends and advises management about quality-associated problems (University of Ghana, 2022). Several attempts have been made by various public universities in Ghana to improve quality within the universities. Quality education, especially at the tertiary level in Ghana aims at the holistic development of the individual academically, psychologically, socially, economically, spiritually and physically (Seniwoliba, 2014).

In 2007, the National Accreditation Board made it mandatory for all tertiary institutions to establish internal quality assurance units. The functions of these units are, among others, to set and ensure the application of quality standards, facilitate the assessment of curricula. In compliance, all public higher education institutions established quality assurance units to enable the NAB to monitor and conduct performance assessments (Seniwoliba, 2015). Quality assurance units were established in public higher education institutions in 2008 to advise on academic standards

regarding teaching, learning and research, evaluate students' assessment of courses and lecturers, conduct assessment exercises and audits. However, since its establishment, there has not been much empirical research on implementation challenges (Seniwoliba & Yakubu, 2015). Seniwoliba and Yakubu (2015) cite some of these challenges as understaffing, lack of training programs, inadequate funding and poor coordination between the academic departments and quality assurance unit staff. For example, a 2022 survey at the University of Ghana on quality assurance revealed students were ignorant of inadequate services provided them and were unaware of services available to them or the location of offices providing these services (University of Ghana, 2022). Despite these challenges, quality assurance in Ghanaian public higher institutions of learning is outstanding. However, quality assurance flourishes in environments where leaders of higher education institutions are devoted to securing top standards with requisite resources.

The governance of public higher education institutions in Ghana is linked to the national governance system. Ghana's country profile reveals that, despite having significant natural deposits such as gold, diamond, bauxite, manganese, and recently crude oil and gas worth quadrillions of dollars, Ghana remains relatively poor. Ghana has abundant arable land and water bodies for profitable agricultural activities, but this potential has not been fully realized. Raw materials and resources mined or grown in Ghana are purchased at a low cost and processed in other countries, depriving Ghana of prospective businesses and jobs required. Ghana's economy is not competitive, with unskilled labor, natural resources, low productivity, an inefficient labor market, and poor quality of life (Gimpa, 2022). With a population of 26.4 million the International Monetary Fund in 2016 estimated four-point one percent of Ghanaians has any type of post-secondary education (GSS 2014). University graduates are becoming increasingly unemployed. Only nearly half (49%) of the young who should be in junior high school are enrolled, and more

than three-quarters, or 77% of the youth who should be in senior high school are not in school. There is an increase in demand for tertiary education that surpasses the present supply. From three percent in 2000 to fourteen-point two percent in 2015, the participation rate has increased by over 75%. This means that 85.8% of college-age students are denied access to tertiary education (Gimpa, 2022). This has ramifications for higher education access, governance and quality education delivery. Since the increase in the number of public and private tertiary education institutions in Ghana, higher education governance has become a critical issue.

Student enrollment in Ghanaian public higher education institutions increased tremendously over the last few years. In 2020, there were over 547, 000 students enrolled in higher education institutions with male students receiving more favorable opportunities than females (Sasu, 2022). Though the number of private higher education institutions outnumber public higher education institutions, the latter accounts for 81.4% of student enrollment while private higher education institutions account for 18.6%. Between 2011/2012 and 2015/2016, Ghanaian public higher education institutions experienced an increase of ten-point nine percent while enrollment in private higher education continue to fluctuate (Ayelazuro & Aziabah, 2021). UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS, 2018) noted that high enrolment in Ghanaian higher education in the 2015/2016 academic year was 16.07% of Ghana's youths capable of higher education out of a population of 2,627,166. A major consequence is a gap of 83.93% incapable of accessing higher education. This gap reduced from 87.91% in 2010/2011 to 83.77% in 2014/2015. However, a marginal increase of 0.04% was recorded in the 2015/2016 academic year. Ironically, pre-tertiary level policy reforms led to a huge increase in senior high school enrolment which did not concur with efforts to expand higher education institutions to accommodate the potential influx. (UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2018). This situation is enhanced by the number of international students enrolling in

Ghanaian higher education institutions. International students from other West African Countries are changing the Ghanaian Higher Education arena. According to Knight (2014) increased collaboration between sub–Saharan African countries, is increasing student movement and internationalization. The Ghanaian National Accreditation Board (GNAB) recorded 10,788 international students in Ghanaian higher education institutions with a majority of 69% emanating from Nigeria in 2012/2013. This explosion of enrolment in Ghanaian public higher education institutions increases cost to the Ghanaian government since most students expect to be accommodated on campuses of the institutions.

Financing Public Higher Education Institutions in Ghana

Funding higher education is a great concern for most public universities and governments in Africa. This challenge is exacerbated by high student population desirous of attaining higher education and the costs associated with quality higher education delivery. The need for governments to solely fund public higher education institutions is changing, making it imperative for public higher education institutions to devise strategies to cope with funding uncertainties.

Though, Ghanaian public higher education institutions rely on Government for funding, the level of funding has dropped substantially, like most African Universities (Atuahene, 2015). As a result, several researchers have contributed to various disputes fueling the sector's lower spending while others claim that this is due to greater economic pressure on several countries and increased student enrolment in higher education (Ahmad et al., 2013). Others involved themselves in the discussion over whether higher education is a public or private good, given the significant private benefits that it confers on the individual Ahmad et al. (2013) and Altbach (2007). Others, such as Brock-Utne (2000) have accused the World Bank of ignoring higher education, particularly in developing nations, like those in sub-Saharan Africa. She added that the World Bank regards higher

education as a luxury rather than a need in underdeveloped nations and hence urges national governments to commit to it. The need to fund public higher education in Ghana was based on the replacements of foreign faculty by national professionals. It is argued that the role of the state in higher education was to ensure qualified needed students attained higher education. As a result, public higher education institutions clamor for public funding to offset the high cost of operations. According to Tetteh (2013) budgeting and fund distribution to public higher education institutions in Ghana rested on requests made by these institutions and negotiations by the National Council on Higher Education with the Ministry of Finance as there was no defined mechanism for funds allocation. Later the Ghanaian government decided funding to tertiary institutions would be program-based without outcome indicators Newman, (2013) & Zhang et al., (2016). Over the past ten years, changes in higher education funding revealed several patterns of change and policies developed because of reductions in state spending. The first is the marketization of higher education and the deregulation of tuition fees. For instance, the Department of Education in the United Kingdom was changed to the Department of Business, Innovation, and Skills in 2009 to make higher education more responsive to student needs. This change in the educational system was meant to boost and increase income Choi, (2015) & Zhang et al., (2016). In response to declining government funding for the sector, academics like Vidovich et al. (2007) noted that strategies like the establishment of tuition fees and the commercialization of some HEI operations have been implemented to help the reduction in Government's spending on higher education.

In developing countries, income generation is largely through tuition, fees and loans to augment Government's subvention. In Ghana, public higher funding was influenced by several factors such as academic programs supported by international funding institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary fund (IMF) geared towards reducing public spending by

Government. Ghanaian Government spending on public higher education was reduced leading to decline in public higher education institutions abilities to provide free accommodation and allowances to students and pay for incidentals (Sawyerr, 2001). Cuts in the Ghanaian government spending to public education decreased until cost sharing measures were introduced by an arrangement between the Government and tertiary institutions which apportioned 70% of the total spending of these tertiary institutions to the Ghanaian government and 30 % to the public higher education institutions to be generated through private donations, internal revenue generation and tuition and fees, The 30% fees from public higher education institutions are to be generated using facilities for accommodation and academics (Abedi, 2018).

The problems of financing Ghanaian higher education increased significantly leading to the establishment of the GETFund, whose responsibility is to produce funds to support infrastructural and academic development (Atuahene, 2015). Currently, funding for public higher education institutions in Ghana are obtained from the government, private sector and students with public funding constituting 57%, and private funding 43% (Duweijua and Newman (2014) & NCTE budget, (2015). Between 2011 and 2015, Ghana's investment on education as a percentage of GDP was 6-8%, accounting for 22-27% of the government's annual expenditures. In recent years, funding has dropped to 3.9% of GDP in 2018 for general education and 1.2% for post-secondary education. Furthermore, higher education receives 19.1% of the government's education budget (Duweijua & Newman, 2015). The Students Loan Trust Fund (SLTF) is another form of government's assistance for students pursuing higher education in Ghana. Act 820 of Ghana established this trust fund in December 2005 to help needy higher education institutions and students (Atuahene, 2008).

Additionally, the Students' Loan Trust Fund, (SLTF), established in 2020 is primary financed from the GETFund supported by voluntary and private contributions, and loans from the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT). To qualify for loans from the SLTF, an applicant must be a needy Ghanaian citizen who has been admitted to a nationally authorized institution of higher learning for an academic program accredited by the National Accreditation Board. Furthermore, the student applicant must have a guarantor to benefit from the fund Atuahene (2008) & Students Loan Trust Fund, 2020).

In addition, several higher education institutions in Ghana provide other types of financial aid. The University of Ghana, for example, provides Students Financial Aid to address the increasing financial demands of their student applicants. This fund is given to outstanding needy students. The fund, which is conditional, compensates for their academic costs and other expenditures. Different higher education institutions in Ghana provide other sorts of financial assistance. The University of Ghana, for example, offers Students Financial Aid to address the rising financial requirements of their prospective student applicants. This grant, also given to needy academically qualified students, covers academic costs and other expenditures, is also conditional on requests.

Public resources apportioned to the public sector doubled revealing that enrolment of students in Ghanaian higher institutions of learning surpassed allotted funding. The decrease in public expenditure impacts the quality and significance of education. In the Ghanaian situation, Atuahene (2008) stated that the decrease in finances and increasing demands for higher education are serious challenges for higher education in Ghana. Inadequate finance leads to problems of inaccessibility and affordability for students, poor infrastructures and low faculty recruitment and retention. Available data shows that for a five -year period, 2011 to 2015, the cost of higher

education increased while government expenditures dwindled. For example, Ghanaian government spending on education in percentages for the period was 2011-39.7%, 2012-79%, 2013- 49.2% (Duweijua, 2015). Accordingly, it is necessary to find additional funding sources to support higher education in Ghana and restructure existing operations.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute of Statistics stated Ghana's overall higher education enrolment in 2018 was 15.7%, up from 11.8% in 2011, with the former accounting for around 2,879,063 of the population aged 19 to 23. Because of the uncertainties and irregularities connected with government funding, several strategic initiatives were undertaken to improve stability and enable long-term planning in universities. According to Abedi (2018) higher portion of the universities' strategic revenue-generating initiatives were deliberately driven internally by the respective institution leaderships where their capacity and influence to create financing is significantly greater compared to other universities.

Policy interventions in Ghanaian Higher Education

Several policy options were adopted to address problems of public higher Education institutions in Ghana. The National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) was designed to encourage quality, applicability, and excellence in higher education and to encourage the development of human capital to support national development objectives. The Strategic plan 2010 to 2020 states tertiary sector's goals are to maintain quality standards in management, teaching, and learning, and to support the formation of world-class professionals. The limited opportunities for access to higher education, particularly for disadvantaged social groups and the poor in developing nations, is one of the major issues worldwide. According to the Framework for Action on SDGs, tertiary education increased at all levels with corresponding

increment in student enrollment which has increased to 100 million in 2000 to 199 million in 2013, while availability of postsecondary education at the university level varies greatly depending on a person's gender, social standing, race, age, and ability. (UNESCO, 2016).

The National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE, 1990), which oversees tertiary education in Ghana, and the Ministry of Education (MOE) created standards for efficiency and helped colleges and universities organize monitoring and assessment operations. The requirements set have an impact on public funding for higher education, procurement and budgeting. Recently, budgetary funding for ongoing expenses at higher education institutions has decreased.

The early 1990s' the norm-based budgeting system broke down because of the government's unwillingness to give funds to meet the high costs of higher education, and ad hoc budgeting was replaced without taking the volume of work done at higher institutions of learning into account. The equality and effectiveness of money management for higher education have been seriously impacted by this development (Newman, 2013).

Educational Governance in Ghanaian Public Higher Education

The British Higher education structure, copied in most British colonial countries like, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria are gradually changing to adopt characteristics of the United States Higher Education governance system. Leadership and management of higher education institutions, which were once combined, are now separate entities. More professional training, competence, and academic leadership are necessary for promotion through the academic ranks. Higher education administration, legal, and policy systems in Ghana continue to play a significant role in the ever-growing higher education landscape and its accompanying funding issues. The rising global need for higher education transformations emphasizes the critical role of higher

education leadership, legal and regulatory frameworks in ensuring long-term funding of higher education.

Inadequate oversight of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) may result in poor quality education with minimal return on investment for students, parents and guardians, the broader public, and the country's overall economic development (Erkkilä & Piironen, 2014). Additionally, as HEIs continue to rely on stakeholders for funding, calls for enhanced accountability from the state, students, parents, guardians, and partners have grown louder. Governance includes decision-making structures and procedures, policy formulation and implementation to direct institutional activities, and the rules and processes by which universities regulate their operations (Hladchenko et at., (2017). Good governance necessitates strong leadership that prioritizes academic freedom, participatory governance, accountability, and the pursuit of academic achievement. Effah (2015) recognized several models of higher education governance, including the continental European model, the British collegial model, the American university model, and the Chinese model. A critical examination of these approaches reveals a shared ambition to achieve academic freedom and autonomy, as well as to stimulate research and knowledge acquisition. Williams (2015) and Collins (2014) observe that ineffective and out-of-date governance and administrative structures can cause academic institutions to fail in achieving their objectives.

Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Administration of Higher Education in Liberia

Liberia's public higher education history is intrinsically linked to the country's political history. Liberia gained independence from the American Colonization Society, (ACS) which spearheaded the migration of freed black slaves from the United States of America to Africa. The ACS was created to deal with the increasing problem of the integration of freed blacks into

American Society whose population had increased from 60,000 to 300,000 following the American Civil War of 1775-1783. (Seeley, 2016). In 1816, a group of wealthy white men established the American Colonization Society (ACS), an institution dedicated to relocating free African Americans outside the borders of the United States. By 1821, the ACS had obtained federal funding for the venture and purchased land in West Africa for the new black settlement of Liberia. Historians have long disagreed about the ACS's goals, which went beyond the prejudicial assumption that African Americans did not belong in the United States of America (Seeley, 2016). The first settlement was in Sierra Leone, a British Colony. Due to high mortality in Sierra Leone, the settlers moved to what is now Liberia in 1822. The founders of the nation who emigrated to Liberia in the early nineteenth century, comprised purposely of freed semi-literate and illiterate blacks to immigrate to Liberia. Most of these immigrants were merchants and plantation workers ignorant about the conduct of trade, crafts, or professions (Boateng, 2021).

Liberia's educational history is tied to the United States educational system with six years of basic education and three years of junior high school and three years of high school. In 1862, fourteen years after Liberia was declared independent, Liberia College was established by the Government of Liberia with funding from the American Colonization society and the Trustees for Donations in Education in Liberia, TDEL (University of Liberia, 2021). Liberia College began operations in 1863. According to Boateng, (2020), the college was established to prevent Liberians from studying abroad. The intention for the establishment of Liberia College was to replicate the infrastructure and curriculum of Universities in the United States of America. The development of higher education in Liberia is tied to the abolition of slavery in America, relocation of freed blacks to Africa and the need for training for their offspring. Rooted in the American Colonization Society and Ashmont Institute, now the Lincoln University, Liberia college was to replicate

Ashmun Institute the first historical black degree granting college in the United States to stop the Liberians immigrants from migrating to Britain to study; a move supporters of Liberia College thought could hinder the establishment of a republican form of government in Liberia (Lulat, 2005). Liberia College operated with limited resources until the 1940's when revenues of the government of Liberia increased due to the country's utilization of its natural resources. In 1951, Liberia College was transformed to the University of Liberia through an Act of the Liberian Legislature (University of Liberia, 2022).

In 1831, the State of Maryland in the United States of America founded the Maryland Colonization Society with the expressed purpose of removing freed blacks who presented a possible threat to America (Davis, 2021). Liberia's second institution of higher learning, Cuttington College, was established in 1887 by the Protestant Episcopal Church of America in the State of Maryland in Southeastern Liberia, known then as the "Independent State of Maryland in Africa" since immigrants to the area originated from the state of Maryland in the United States of America supported by the Maryland Colonization Society (Hall, 2003). Cuttington College is the oldest private degree granting institution in Liberia and the oldest in Sub-Saharan Africa (Cuttington University, Liberia, 2022). The college was subsequently transferred to Suacoco in central Liberia in 1949. (Cuttington College, 2022). In 2005, Cuttington College was upgraded to the Cuttington University.

The University of Liberia and Cuttington College operated as Liberia's highest institutions of learning until the 1980's when other tertiary institutions were granted rights to operate. Currently, there are 38 higher institutions of learning in Liberia, eight publics, eight private and eighteen faith- based (NCHE, 2022). Most of these mushroomed after the civil war to cater to the large number of students seeking higher education.

Administration of Higher Education in Sierra Leone

Higher education in Sierra Leone dates to 1827 with the establishment of Fourah Bay College by Anglican Church Missionary Society, the first western styled higher education institution in West Africa during British colonialism. Fourah Bay College had close ties with Durham University of England, the first university to operate in England for over 600 years after Oxford and Cambridge (Fourah Bay College, 2022). Fourah Bay College, was reconstituted in 2005 as the University of Sierra Leone combining, the Institute of Public Administration and Management, (IPAM), and the College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences, (COMAHS) (University of Sierra Leone, 2022). The University of Sierra Leone is a public University funded largely by the Government of Sierra Leone.

Njala University, the second oldest university in Sierra Leone was founded as a university college patterned after American land grant universities which has grown into a leading research University in Sierra Leone (Ministry of Technical and Higher Education, 2022). After the passage of the University Act of 2005, Njala University became an autonomous public institution of higher learning. Public Higher education institutions in Sierra Leone expanded in 2021 to include four new Universities and several Technical and vocational schools. Currently, there are four public universities and over 36 private and faith-based institutions of higher learning. The public higher education institutions are the University of Sierra Leone, Njala University, Ernest Bai Kromah University of Science and Technology, and Milton Margai College of education and Technology.

Effects of Civil Wars on the Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone

There are many definitions about what constitutes conflicts. Tjosvold (2006) states the traditional definition of conflict is based on relationships where people have opposing interests over scarce resources and divergent goals. Different scholars argue conflicts are based on

assumptions that parties' goals are not agreeable and should result in one party winning over the other. Merriam Webster Dictionary (2018) defines conflict as opposing action of incompatibility or to content in warfare. Conflicts manifest in different forms, interpersonal, violent, nonviolent, and armed. A conflict is further defined by the American Thesaurus as a battle, war or fight. A conflict differs significantly from what most scholars writing on problems in Higher Education refer to as a crisis. A crisis is a prominent condition of contemporary organizational life which are often senseless, unpredictable moments of complexities and experiences for people with leadership responsibilities and provide opportunities to analyze organizational leadership in higher education (Roitman, 2014 & Gigliotti, 2017). Most time, these crises refer to issues of sexual abuse, academic fraud, scandals, racial discrimination, and other offenses, which do not bring these institutions to a close, like in the case of violent conflicts.

Arthur (2011) believed that the type of conflict changed in terms of their uniqueness and severity, and cites conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone as countries where excessive lawlessness gave rise to private armies, the erosion of state borders, and encouragement of international drug cartels. According to Annan (2014), internal conflicts in countries emerge because of poverty, inequalities, bad governance, human rights violations, corruption, and ethnic marginalization. For years, conflicts in West African states of Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire were embroiled in conflicts characterized by prevalent killings and collapse of economies (Annan, 2014). Intra-state conflicts posed severe threats to regional peace and stability and warranted external intervention because they were considered African problems which required African solutions with other international actors turning a blind eye and adopting a laissez- faire approach to the problem forcing the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, to act to avoid plunging the West Africa region into chaos.

The area now known as West Africa, comprises several states that experienced colonialism. These 15 English, French and Portuguese speaking countries make up the West African Sub-Region. In 1945, France advanced the idea of a unified currency, CFA Franc for French speaking West African Colonies which integrated them (Economic Community of West African States, 2022). This move was followed by a proposal from Liberia's President William Tubman for the establishment of an economic union for West African states in 1964, culminating in an agreement signed in 1965 by Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sierra Leone (Ecowas, 2022). It was not until 1975 that a treaty was signed by the fifteen West African countries establishing the Economic Commission of West African States, (ECOWAS). ECOWAS's purpose was to promote economic and political cooperation between member states (Obi, 2009). Two years later, due to internal conflicts between francophone and anglophone countries in Ecowas, French speaking countries signed a mutual non-aggression defense pact which provided for a regional standby force (Obi, 2009).

Causes and Effects of the Liberian War on Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Liberian history documents political domination of one group of Liberians of African American decent over the Indigenous population of Liberia for over one hundred years. Characteristics of this period were rife with socio-political exclusion, inter-tribal rivalry, and marginalization. Data available prior to the war highlights class stratification, control of political and economic power and marginalization of indigenous population by a paltry five percent of decedents of freed American blacks who founded Liberia to the exclusion of native Liberians. This situation continued for one hundred and thirty-three years when a military coup in 1980 toppled the ruling Americo-Liberian political structure and brought into being a government headed by a

native Liberian. The coup was a response to escalating discontent, marginalization of the Indigenous population, and exclusion from the body politic and social fabric of the country by the Americo-Liberians since Liberia's founding in 1847. Many of the political elite fled into exile after some former government officials were publicly executed in 1980. The coup led by enlisted members of the Liberian military brought to power a government made up of native Liberians who controlled state power for five years before metamorphosizing into a civilian government.

Disenchantment by members of the former ruling class, heighten tribalism and efforts at political perpetration led to an insurgency in 1989 which escalated into a civil war. The war which commenced on Liberia's border with the Ivory coast in northwestern Liberia swept swiftly through the country and reached the Capital Monrovia in eight months. The inability to take the capital and the deaths, destruction and human sufferings gave impetus to the West African Community to intervene to stop the spread through neighboring countries. In May 1990 ECOWAS meeting in Banjul, Nigeria's then-military head of state General Abraham Badamosi Babangida made the case for regional mediation in the conflict, based on a request from Liberian President Samuel Doe to ECOWAS for assistance against the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) insurgents. ECOWAS established a Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) comprised of Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo to facilitate conflict resolution in Liberia. The SMC declared a cease-fire and established the ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group— ECOMOG to handle the conflict in Liberia.

Nigeria was a driving force behind the formation of ECOMOG, tasked with monitoring and enforcing a cease-fire in Liberia as a first step towards restoring law and order, establishing an interim government, and preparing for elections (Obi, 2009). A regional intervention force, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group, ECOMOG was formed comprising West African countries of

ECOWAS. ECOMOG's mission was to monitor the events of the Liberian war, force a cease fire to set up an interim government and prepare for elections (ECOWAS, 2008). ECOMOG, comprising forces from Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Ghana, and the Gambia, entered Liberia in August 1990 to stop the carnage and curtail insecurity in the region. This made Liberia the first experiment in regional peace keeping in Africa in 1990, followed by Sierra Leone in 1992 (Obi, 2009).

ECOWAS's involvement in Liberia was defensible on the grounds that western powers, including the United States of America, despite its military might and traditional history to Liberia argued for the need to find an African solution to an African Problem. ECOMOG's presence in Liberia was justified because of the necessity to stop an escalating conflict with neighboring West African states which were already over-burdened with Liberian refugees. Other schools of thought were that if the Liberian war, using insurgents from neighboring countries was allowed to succeed, other countries in the region could face similar reprisals. It was also evident that the Liberian rebel fashion included dissidents from Sierra Leone, Ghana, and the Gambia.

The Sierra Leonean civil war, which lasted from 1991 to 2002, began as an extension of the Liberian civil war. Sierra Leonean dissidents were backed Charles Taylor in the attempt to depose Sierra Leonean President Joseph Momoh. Taylor was also enraged by the Sierra Leonean participation in ECOMOG and the use of Sierra Leonean territory as a launch pad for ECOMOG's air support to Liberia. ECOMOG responded by expanding its mandate to include Sierra Leone (Obi, 2009). With ECOMOG's intervention and subsequent financial support from Britain, which provided direct support and forces, the Sierra Leonean war raged on. Liberia and Sierra Leone are neighboring West African countries. Similarities between both countries exist in family ties,

languages, culture, and social affiliation. More importantly, the countries share common features in geographic, climatological, and natural resources (Howe, 2015).

Figure 3

Map of Sierra Leone and Liberia Showing Proximity

Map of Sierra Leone and Liberia Source: Geology.com

Historical antecedents are also similar in that both countries were originally founded as havens for freed blacks in America and Europe. Liberia was founded in 1822 as an asylum for freed blacks from America and declared its independence in 1847. Though Liberia was never colonized by a European power, these freed blacks or Americo-Liberians who controlled Liberia for 133 years, subjugated natives to a de facto colonization by setting themselves up as a distinct class from native Liberians. Americo-Liberians, though only a meager 5% of the population, dominated political social and economic life, climaxing in the military coup of 1980 (Ukeje, Gbla & Ismail, 2009). Sierra Leone was also founded as a haven to settle slaves from the United Kingdom and Canada. In 1787, Sierra Leone became a protectorate of the British and remained so until 1961 when it gained independence (Howe, 2015). Like Liberia, the freed slave or creole population in Sierra Leone constituted an elite group economically and distanced themselves from native Sierra

Leoneans until 1968 (Sesay, 2009). Both Sierra Leone and Liberia have youthful populations with over 65% below 35 years World Bank, (2013) and World Bank (2023).

In December 1989, Liberians and other West African dissidents led an armed incursion into Liberia from neighboring Cote d'Ivoire. By August 1990, the conflict reached unimagined proportions with indiscriminate killings, destruction of properties and massive looting. The Liberian conflict displaced hundreds of thousands internally and externally, producing hundreds of thousands of refugees throughout West Africa. Untold economic and social problems were wreaked on people within the country. The war destroyed Liberia and all its social institutions (Ogbonnaya, 2013). Seven months after the incursion into Liberia, the Economic Community of West African States, (ECOWAS) sent a West African Monitoring Group and peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, to Liberia to stop the mayhem and evacuate West African citizens caught in the fray. This first experiment at regional peacekeeping led by Anglophone West Africa and Guinea, Liberia's northern neighbor, was launched in August 1990. The Liberian Civil Conflict lasted 14 years from December 1989- October 2003. Two years after the start of the Liberian civil war, forces fighting in Liberia launched an attack on neighboring Sierra Leone which hosted some members of the ECOMOG air force operating in Liberia. The Sierra Leonean war, fought concurrently with the Liberia war lasted ten years, 1992-2002. The Liberia and Sierra Leonean wars resulted in infrastructural and institutional destruction Kargbo (2002, & Ogbonnaya, (2013). Scholarly works on the effects of the Liberian and Sierra Leonean wars on the administration of Public Higher Education Institutions are scanty. Most studies on the effects of these wars on education concentrate on primary and secondary education which were considered direr.

Educational Quality of Public Higher Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone

During the more than 10 years of civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, all public and tertiary institutions were closed. Campuses of educational institutions were either physically destroyed by the wars, utilized as shelters for displaced people or were targets of parties for one reason or the other. In the case of Liberia, the University of Liberia was targeted because of its proximity to the Executive Mansion, home of the President. In Sierra Leone, the University of Sierra Leone was at the highest peak in the city and was home to the ECOMOG Forces, whose peacekeeping duties extended to Sierra Leone after that country was attacked by Liberian dissidents supported by insurgent forces. In both instances, public higher education institutions were among the first casualties of the civil wars in these countries. Attempts to restore the educational system in Liberia and Sierra Leone were unorganized, unstructured, as volunteer teachers and international non-governmental organizations established schools and programs without government accreditation or prescribed curricula. While these stop-gap measures kept children in schools, the results of such programs were catastrophic for PHEIs charged with the responsibility to deliver quality education to ill-prepared youths. The Accelerated Learning Programs (APL) in Liberia and Sierra Leone were aimed at delivering quality education to out-of-school children and youths by collapsing six years educational cycles to four to allow primary and secondary school students to pursue further education or enter the job market. (Boisvert, Fleming & Shah, 2017). Public higher education institutions expected to absorb these students found most of them ill-prepared for tertiary education. In 2013, ten years after the war ended in Liberia, 25,000 students who sat the entrance exams for admission to the University of Liberia failed, evidencing problems with the pre- university education system (Sumoworo, 2015).

Poor student preparation was compounded by mass emigration of faculty from public higher education institutions to safety in other countries and pursuit of better employment

opportunities. In conflict situations in West Africa, human capital is one of the first objects and affected institutions are universities and colleges. In countries involved in civil wars, there are massive deaths, displacement and or socio-economic conditions which reduce human capital, generally relied upon for development. Mass expatriation of professionally trained and skilled manpower is referred to as brain drain. The African Union estimates that over 700,000 skilled manpower leave Africa every year, diminishing skilled human resources in their countries and reducing economic growth. (African Union Report, 2018). For Example, more than 77% of Liberia's trained doctors emigrated to the United States during the war. According to the 2015 World Health Organization's data, there are 51 doctors for Liberia's 4.5 million population and 135 doctors for Sierra Leone's six million people (Barclay, 2002). Statistics from the Ministry of Health show there are 500 doctors for a population of over five million in Liberia (MOH, 2022).

The conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone caused mass exodus of scarce faculty members from higher institutions of learning to American, Europe and other African countries. While the primary reason was safety, other socio-economic factors influenced the brain drain in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In the context of this study, brain drain refers to the unwilling movement of educated professional faculty members due to fear of death, disability or uncertainty caused by civil conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Since African Universities built capacities by financing the education of faculty members outside of Africa, brain drain also encompasses the loss of specialized trained persons from these institutions. Firstly, most of the faculty in higher institutions of learning were trained in America or Britain where affinity made migration easy.

Additionally, humanitarian policies of immigration to America and European countries fuel brain drain, not only in the educational sector but all socio-economic sectors of war-affected countries, depriving them of human capital necessary to rebuild. The United States Government family-based

Immigration Policy, enshrined in its Immigration and Naturalization Act, permits immediate relatives of immigrant U.S. citizens to immigrate to the United States as lawful permanent residents. (Kandel, 2018). The primary category of eligible people are spouses, minor unmarried children, and parents. Other categories of immigration provided are immigration of persons with needed skills, refugee protection, and country of origin diversity (Kandel, 2018). These policies supported the immigration and retention of qualified faculty in America and other European Countries specified for relocation. From the World Bank, (2016), about 33.7% of Sierra Leoneans living in Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, (OECD) countries are tertiary educated (World Bank, 2016). The OECD is an intergovernmental organization established in 1948 with Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom as members. The OECD is established to provide avenues for governments to share experiences and develop economic policies based on internationally accepted best practices to build better lives (OECD, 2023).

The protected temporary immigration status in the United States discriminates against immigrants with citizenship and those with security and legal protection known as temporary protective status (TPS). According to Reilly, (2016) temporary protective status denies some Liberian immigrants' rights to higher education which could allowed them to participate more fully as citizen in the United States and Liberia. As of 2021, there were 100, 000 Liberians in the United States. Temporary Protective Status, (TPS), was created in 1990 to provide protection and access to work for Liberians unlawfully in the United States who had immigrated due to the Liberian conflicts. Though the wars ended over twelve years ago, a new Liberian immigration fairness

program was established by the United States Congress in 2019 to allow Liberians, who had lived in the United States since 2014, opportunities to apply for lawful permanent residency (LRIF, 2022). The rationale for the program, according to United States Congressman Jack Reed (D-RI), is These people moved to America in order to escape catastrophic conflicts and natural disasters. They have established themselves here, bolstered our communities, and made this place their home. They should not be forced to leave America since it is their home. There would be severe challenges both here and in Liberia if they were forced to return there right now. By extending their legal status, we are supporting Liberia's post-war rehabilitation while giving people much-needed certainty and a sense of security. (LRIF, 2022).

These selective immigration policies encouraged brain drain and made post-conflict development in Liberia and Sierra Leone difficult. The Liberian and Sierra Leonean education sectors introduced reforms to tackle issues of quality in PHEIS, which included capacity building across the disciplines, development of governance frameworks, improving ICT and distance learning platforms, affordable quality education and investment in infrastructural development (Guerrero, (2014) & Ministry of Education, (2016).

The Challenge of Violence and Student Activism in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Student and faculty violence pose distinct challenges in the administration of PHEIs in post conflict countries. Violent protests, activisms and wanton destruction of already inadequate infrastructures and properties characterize discourses, policy decisions and sometimes government pronouncements. Causes for violent behavior in students are attributed to post conflict trauma, substance abuse, political activities, academic and peer pressures. Violence on University campuses caused breaks in the academic calendar, closures of institutions and unnecessary delays in completion. Hassan & Ageed, (2015), stated that long exposure to conflicts and aggression can

trigger violent behavior in students, particularly students who participated in wars. Student unrests has led to injury, deaths, and destruction in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Murphy (2003) asserted that wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia forced many youths into "dual roles of victims and victimizers, causing them physical and psychological harm. The extent to which the effects of war and conflict-related trauma, especially in unrehabilitated youths, translate to violence at the slightest incitement needs further investigation. More importantly, there is a need for further investigation on the consequences of violence on the administration of public higher education institutions of learning in post-conflict societies, especially since some scholars assert transgenerational trauma is passed down from one generation to the next irrespective of whether the younger generation experienced the traumatic effect or not. Traumatic experiences caused by wars lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and offspring of war participants have a higher rate of aggression and anxiety than those who did not participate in armed conflicts (Castro-Vale et al. 2019). The idea is that a person who experienced trauma can pass it to another who will exhibit the same signs and symptoms; confirming trauma has psychological impacts on children of conflict survivors (Brig et al., 2012). This effect of violent conflicts on the administration of public higher posed more serious challenges because administrators had to deal with students with abnormal characteristics for which no remedy was being found and yet had no justifiable rationale for refusing them admission.

Summary

Public Higher education institutions play a pivotal role in supporting socio–economic growth and development, poverty reduction, knowledge and skills transfer in post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone. Administrative challenges raised deal with challenges faced by PHEI administrators during periods of normalcy. Most documented literature available cite challenges of administering PHEIs in Africa dealing with regular issues of governance, quality assurance,

clamor for funding and rarely deal with post-conflict administration such as infrastructural destruction, reconstruction and post-conflict trauma of administrators, faculty, staff, and students. This study intends to look at specific challenges of administering PHEIs after civil conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the effects of the conflicts on higher education and mitigation strategies. It is intended that this study will highlight some of the unique challenges which administrators of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone encountered and provide a new body of knowledge based on the perspectives of these administrators which could guide for PHEI administrators in similar circumstances.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter discusses the research approach and design, the population and sample size of the research study, the materials and instrumentation of the research tools, study procedures, ethical assurances, data collection, analysis and summary. The chapter is arranged into various sections which begins with an introduction outlining the goals of the research and concludes with the findings.

The aim of all research is to systematically examine and study materials and sources to determine facts and reach new conclusions or discover new knowledge using different methods (Creswell, 2007). This study attempts to identify and explore specific war related administrative challenges and their severity caused in effective administration of higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the administrative responses to these challenges and impacts of the challenges on public Higher Education Institutions. Due to the paucity of data on the challenges of higher education administration in post-conflict societies in West Africa, administrative theories provide a suitable framework for this study to understand and give meaning to higher education administrative challenges in post-conflict higher education situations in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Research Approach and Design

This qualitative study utilized semi-structured interviews for data collection. Three research approaches were utilized in the study. The first was an extensive desk review of published materials on similar topics in developed and developing countries and the education systems in pre and post-conflict in Liberia and Sierra Leone to provide an understanding of the educational goals and directions of these countries in both epochs. Literature on higher education policies, strategies, and programs of both countries during and after the conflicts were analyzed to determine the extent of the continuation, breakdown, or improvements in the systems. It is important to

mention that literature on the administration of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, as post conflict countries, were limited. The researcher also looked at administrative structures, leadership styles and change mechanisms, adopted to address challenges in the administration of public higher education institutions brought about by the civil conflicts.

The literature review did not influence the outcome of the research findings but basically served as a review of existing studies to inform, understand and appreciate initial works done on similar topics to set the basis for the current study. This is because studies using themes derived from the findings of other works are usually subjected to further literature review and reflexivity to align the findings to literature. The literature review sets the basis for the development of interview questions and interview guide to address the key questions in the research study. The second stage involved the pretest of the interview guide by administering them to non- participants to determine their relevance to the subject matter and revise them to meet research objectives. The research guide was developed and used for interviews conducted with participants in this study at locations of the selected public universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The recorded data were transcribed, coded, and developed into themes to derive meanings. The findings were analyzed, interpreted and presented.

Statistics gathered from the National Commission on Higher Education in Liberia, NCHE, (2017) state there are three public universities in Liberia and seven community colleges. Sierra Leone has four public universities and eight colleges and polytechnics, (Ministry of Technical and Tertiary Education 2018). The population for this study was drawn from four public higher education institutions, the University of Liberia, William V.S. Tubman University, the University of Sierra Leone, Njala University, and key higher education policy makers and administrators in

Liberia and Sierra Leone. These public higher institutions of learning are situated miles apart in Liberia and Sierra Leone. See Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 4

Map Showing the Distance Between the Institutions Used in this Study
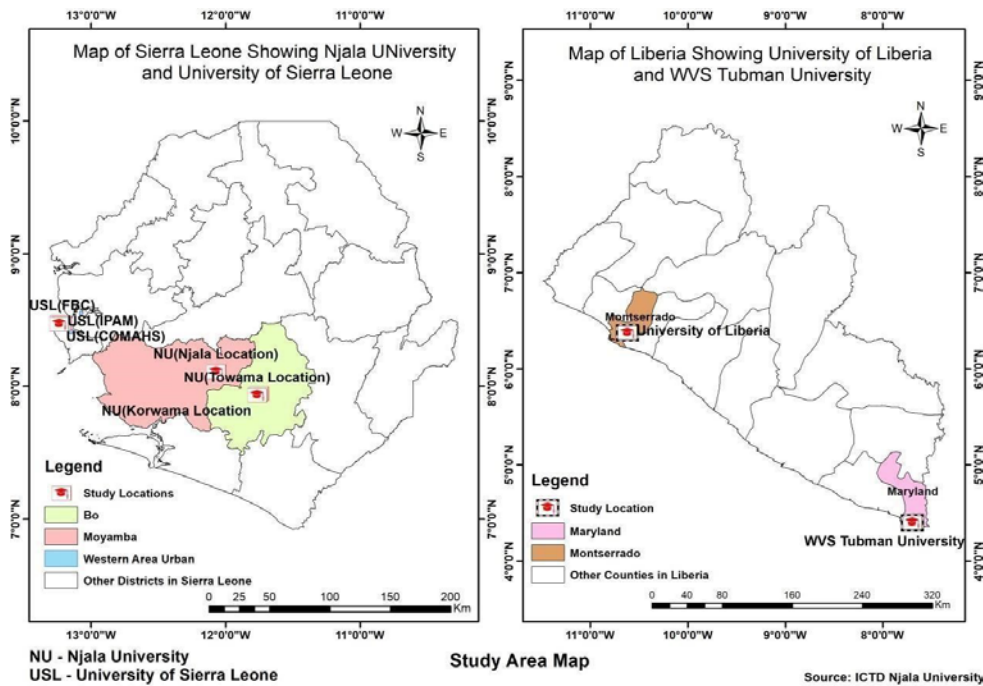
Source ICTD Njala University (2023)

In-depth interviews are particularly useful for qualitative studies because they enable the researcher to ask open-ended questions that are direct, emergent, and unrestricted to allow the researcher more direct control over the data construction (Charmaz, 2006). The qualitative research interview enables the researcher to explore aspects of life over which the participants have direct experience and insights and increase analytical forcefulness (Charmaz, 2006). More importantly, interviews are conversation inquiries that allow the researcher to structure questions to meet the research objectives. Qualitative studies are practical and based on experiential, designed to grasp the feelings and attitudes of a particular group of people. For this study, the target population was

public higher education administrators and policymakers in Liberia and Sierra Leone who worked during and after the civil wars in these countries.

Empirical data collected were analyzed and interpreted. Findings from the study will inform education policy planners and decision-makers, influence administrative changes, and set guidelines for future educational planning, direction, and administration in post-conflict societies. The researcher relied on qualitative research method of thematic analysis which attempts to understand and assign meanings individuals attach to their experiences, within the environment and setting of the research. The researcher endeavored to ensure credibility of the data and its interpretation.

Scope and Constraints

Both Liberia and Sierra Leone have experienced a proliferation of public and private higher education institutions since their respective civil wars. These countries are reestablishing academic programs, renovating old infrastructures and constructing new facilities at these institutions to expand academic programs and deliver quality higher education services, despite numerous setbacks. The study was limited to four public institutions of higher learning: two each from Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively. These institutions were the University of Liberia and William V.S. Tubman University in Liberia, and the University of Sierra Leone and Njala University in Sierra Leone. The universities were selected because they are the oldest and most populous public universities in these countries. More importantly, they existed before the civil wars which allowed administrators to discuss conditions before, during and after the wars. The study explored strategies administrators of these institutions use to govern, their effectiveness and approaches of leadership and organizational change to mitigate these problems.

Public universities in Africa are confronted with numerous challenges that affect effective administration. Some Public higher education institutions adopt new coping mechanisms while others are beleaguered with unique problems occasioned by civil unrest, leaving multi-dimensional impacts. The impact of civil conflicts on public higher education institutions has been documented from numerous perspectives. Ndebe (2010), Teferra and Altbach (2004), and Sumoworo (2015) cite effects of conflicts on teaching quality, student enrolment, educational governance, and funding. Literature on the administrative challenges of public higher education institutions in post-conflict societies is scanty. There is no indication in the literature review that explores the impact of civil wars on the administration of Public higher education institutions. Additionally, issues of education governance in post-conflict societies are a novel area of study in West Africa where at least seven of Ecowas's sixteen countries are engulfed in conflicts. The situation is more serious when the object of the study is limited to two West African countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The limited number of documentary records on this evidence a need for further and continuous research of this subject matter.

Administrators of public higher education are inundated with a plethora of administrative challenges in post -conflict situations, which are different from those experienced during periods of peace. During normal situations, Administrators of African higher education institutions are concerned mostly with matters of finances to support academic and physical expansion, research and operational costs. While these concerns exist during periods of violent conflicts, the magnitude exceeds the capacity of public higher education institutions to function adequately since most of the financial support comes from the government. These administrative challenges have direct bearing on public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This study provides a conceptual framework for analysis of the problem by exploring the connection between violent

conflicts and administrative challenges in public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone; utilizing data collected from primary and secondary sources for analysis and interpretation. Primary data included those collected from government and institutional publications, journal articles, internal and external records and reports from the institutions under study. The importance of primary data to a research study is that it enables the researcher to collect information germane to their study. Primary sources are fundamental materials which give firsthand accounts of topics and events as bases for research void of interpretation or reviews. More importantly, the data collected is valid, reliable and current (Robinson, 2020).

   This chapter deals specifically with the research approach and design that were used in the study and its appropriateness to the research study after the examination of various qualitative research methods. The chapter also describes the population and sample size of the research study and discusses the relevance of the population and sample size as adequate for the accepted standards of qualitative research design. These include ethical considerations and assurances, data collection processes, analysis and interpretation. It explains the specific processes of data collection used in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

   A qualitative case study design is employed in this study because it allows the examination of data within a particular context, which covers a defined geographical area and a small population size as subjects under study. Silverman (2010) and Starman (2013) defined a case study as a type of research methodology that helps investigate occurrences from several sources in a specific context that is defined by the interpretations of people's independent experiences and the meanings they assign to them.

This is a qualitative study that allowed the researcher to explore a given phenomenon of interest, challenges in higher education administration within a fixed pre- and post-conflict context from multiple sources within the Liberian and Sierra Leonean higher education administrative arena.

A case study is a detailed examination that seeks to answer what, why, and how using interviews. This makes it possible for an event to be examined from different perspectives to give understanding (Baxter & Jack, 2010). A case study centers on an individual or group, unlike phenomenological research, which examines the experiences of several individuals. According to Yin, (2003) a case study design should be used when the researcher wants to study the background of a subject because he or she believes they are important to the issues under study and answers the questions of what, why, and how. This is a qualitative study that allows researchers to explore experiences of key participants administrating public higher education institutions or formulating policies governing these institutions to derive understanding and meanings of the phenomena.

The interviews for this study were conducted face-to-face and recorded on the spot-on the campuses or offices of the selected participants. The interviews were conducted with the selected participants at the University of Liberia, William V. S. Tubman University, University of Sierra Leone, Njala University, the Ministries of Education and National Commissions of Higher Education in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews. According to Siedman (2013), the main technique used by researchers to investigate the experiences of the people who make up the organization or carry out the process is interviewing them. Sturman (1998) states that a case study is used to explore individual or group experiences to derive a comprehensive description of individual cases or groups and their analysis, which can be classified according to time dimension. In the case with Liberia and Sierra Leone, both countries experienced civil conflicts within the same time frame, Liberia, 1990-2003 and Sierra Leone 1991-

2002. This factor enabled the researcher to examine the incidents as a single case study. The participants selected for this study served in their respective public higher education institutions prior to, during and after the civil wars. This case study specifically deals with the impact of civil conflicts on the administration of public higher education institutions in post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone.

This study provided the researcher the opportunities to derive in-depth understanding of real-life situations and experiences of people administering public higher education institutions in post- conflict situation in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The researcher selected qualitative research methodology for this study because it is exploratory and appropriate to derive understanding of actual challenges, perceptions, and opinions of the participants in the study. Data collection methods for quantitative and qualitative studies differ. Quantitative research depends on numerical or measurable data while quantitative research counts on the interpretation of experiences and personal accounts to demonstrate how people respond to society or think. Since quantitative research focuses on measurable facts it was not useful for this study which deals with interpretation of the experiences of participants. Different qualitative research methods were contemplated before the selection of case study as a research design. The phenomenon under study requires interpretation of the subjective experiences of individuals and meanings derived therefrom (Starman, 2013). Qualitative research concentrates on exploring, examining, and describing phenomenon or people in their natural locations. Qualitative methods differ from quantitative research which focuses on measurable facts that are difficult when considering abstract concepts (Castellan, 2010). Consequently, qualitative case study design was selected for this study because the aim is to explore challenges in the administration of public higher education institutions in post conflict societies. By assessing the administrators' perceptions of their real-life experiences, the

researcher tried to get a better understanding of the specific challenges in the administration of public higher education institutions in post conflict societies of Liberia and Sierra Leone. The objective of qualitative research is not to solve problems or make judgments, but to get an understanding of the experiences of others and their significance Siedman (1991).

Data collection methods for quantitative and qualitative studies are different. Quantitative research depends on numerical or measurable data while qualitative research counts on the interpretation of experiences and personal accounts to demonstrate how people respond to society or think. According to Patton (2002), qualitative data is the ability to capture and convey another person's worldview in their own words. Seidman (1991) states that this technique enables researchers to gain a deeper knowledge of human behavior and experience. In qualitative research, there are no predefined theories or hypotheses. The findings are derived from the data. Interviewing is used as a technique that creates and analyzes data from a group of participants, which can be conducted in either a semi-structured or an unstructured manner (Schwandt, 2001). Seidman (1991) asserted that in interviewing for research, the primary interest is the valued experiences of others. There are four basic types of interviews used in research studies: structured, semi-structured, unstructured, and group interviews. A structured interview is based on a set of pre -pre-determined questions used to obtain answers from the interviewee while an unstructured interview does not have prearranged questions. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method in which predetermined open-ended questions are combined with opportunities for the researcher to ask follow-up questions to explore themes further. The group or focus group interview provides a setting for a group of similar participants to ponder the question asked and provide meaningful perceptions of the participants' experiences and beliefs.

The researcher opted to use semi-structured interviews for this study because semi-structured interviews are appropriate to examine, identify, and describe perceptions of life experiences of individuals. It is also appropriate for case studies to describe situations and how they were experienced by individuals (Yin, 2016). The basic objective of this qualitative research study is to explore the participants' knowledge and experiences and describe these occurrences from their perspectives through face-to-face interviews. According to Lindlof & Taylor (2002), many researchers suggest that it is generally beneficial for interviewers to have an interview guide or a type of informal grouping of topics and questions that an interviewer would ask in different ways to different participants. The guide allows the researcher to concentrate on the topics at hand without constraining them to a particular format.

For the semi-structured interview, an interviewer normally has a basic structure of the themes or topics to be explored. However, a specific topic or topics that an interviewer wants to explore during the interview should be prepared in advance. Interviews are important for qualitative research because they allow the participants the opportunity to explain and share opinions, which will stimulate better understanding of a phenomenon. Jamshed (2014) stated that semi-structured interviews are based on a set of graphic presentations of the questions being explored by the interviewer. The interviews were based on a scripted interview guide to ascertain that all participants were asked the same questions to establish that the same type of questions were administered, and information was collected from each participant. It was important to ensure that the interview questions were aligned with the research questions without influencing the participants' answers. Too much information about the research has the propensity to be biased and invasive (Siedman 2012), or even influence the answers of respondents based on concerns about the research and as Kolar et al. (2015) agreed it may result in interactions between

researchers that could be exploitative. The researcher needed to be aware of these dangers and avoid these mistakes, as previously highlighted. According to Rubin and Rubin (2005) qualitative interviews are exchanges or dialogues in which the researcher gently leads the interviewee in a protracted discussion. Since they steer the conversation in this context, the researchers' position is to control the interview. Rubin and Rubin (2005) also assert that the researcher controls the course of the interview's conversation. According to Magaldi and Berler (2020) an exploratory interview is a semi-structured interview and suggest that the semi-structured interview is typically focused on the main topic that offers a general sequence and that it is typically based largely on a guide. Additionally, Magaldi and Berler (2020) posit that the semi-structured interview allows a researcher to delve deep for an exploration despite previous topical trajectories. In the semi-structured interview, an interviewer generally has a framework to be explored.

The inability to find a recent validated questionnaire or research guide related to the study was problematic. This required the creation of a research guide or interview questions to address the research questions of this study. The interview guide for this study was developed based on a set of pre-determined open-ended questions aligned to the research questions and objectives, which provided the researcher with the chance to examine responses for more details while guiding the interview. This action was important to compare responses from each participant. The semi-structured interviews provided uniformity to the data since the questions were predetermined. These questions also allowed the solicitation of information pertinent to the research objectives. When a researcher wants to gather qualitative, open-ended data, explore participants' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about a specific topic, and investigate personal and occasionally delicate issues, semi-structured interviews are an effective method. During semi-structured interviews, the

researcher has an outline of themes to discover. Rubin and Rubin (2005) assert that a good interview balances the interview questions, follow-up questions and inquiries.

Using methods suggested by Patton, (2015), familiarization with the research procedures was necessary for content validity. Patton (2015) suggests questions should be developed to address the participant's past, current, and future. To assess the interview questions' applicability to the research questions, a group of experts in related fields was constituted. The initial research guide with questions for this study was developed and piloted with eight administrators purposively selected to examine the appropriateness of the research questions to the topic under study. These administrators did not form part of the final participants of the study. Their role was strictly to answer questions to test the interview guide and enable revisions where necessary to elicit the best responses tailored to the research questions. From the dominant feedback, the researcher redesigned and modified the questions contained in the interview guide. This process conforms to Chenail, (2011), who suggested that preliminary interviews allow the interviewer the opportunity to review the effectiveness of each interview question and make revisions. The interview questions become a research tool for the interviewer, who must learn to remain receptive in order not to influence the interviewee's narrative (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

To determine the usefulness of the initial research guide use for the pretest, the researcher evaluated the questions using a five-point Likert scale of no significance, little significance, moderate significance, strong significance, very strong significance allowed for better data distribution and easy analysis. Using the five-point Likert scale also ensured a middle neutral point. Responses of the panel were tabulated to generate a score for each set of items to determine their appropriateness to the research questions. The results of the pilot led to the revision and restructuring of the initial guide. The research guide was also expanded to include topics of

interests germane to the study. Patton (2015) provided a good example for evaluating outcomes to determine the results and impacts of an intervention which was useful for determining the usefulness of the study questions. Administering these pre-research questionnaires provided avenues for flexibility, and adaptation to the needs and circumstances of the selected individuals (Patton, 2015; Schorr, 1988). According to Patton (2015), participants with different backgrounds and experiences will deal with their experiences in diverse ways that are qualitatively relevant because of the comprehensive, illustrative, and contemplative information regarding the distinct experiences of every participant.

Participants Recruitment

Criteria for selection to participate in this study was the participant's past or current involvement in the administration of a public higher education institution or policy decision making during or after the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Prospective participants were identified from public information, records of the educational institutions and current positions as past and current presidents or vice chancellors, past and current ministers of education and higher education, past and present vice presidents and deputy vice chancellors, director generals of national commissions on higher education or tertiary education. Where necessary, participants were also selected based on the recommendations from other participants or people knowledgeable about their work and experiences. These people were contacted by telephone, email and sent letters requesting their consent to participate in the study. The request letters detailed the purpose of the study, information of the researcher, voluntary participation, requirements to fill in and sign a consent form, rights of withdrawal, and mode of data collection. Once informed consent forms were signed, indicating participants' willingness to contribute to the study, follow-up communications were sent to establish formal appointments for the interviews. The inter-personal

interviews were scheduled with each participant at a time and venue agreed. With one exception for a participant not in Liberia or Sierra Leone, who was interviewed on phone, all interviews were held in offices of the participants. To facilitate data collection, the researcher concentrated on one country at a time starting with participants in Liberia.

Sampling Method

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants in this study because of the usefulness in identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals with knowledge and experiences about the subject of interest. Creswell & Clark (2011) noted that it is effective when dealing with limited resources and individuals knowledgeable and willing to contribute and share their experiences and opinions. Purposive sampling is a non-probability method researchers use to select participants from a sampling body because they possess characteristics the researcher is interested in examining. It does not require any statistical inference but seeks to derive meanings and understanding from the experiences and opinions of participants. Purposive sampling starts with specific characteristics the researcher has, which allows for finding participants with a variety of those characteristics (Dicarlo, 2018). In essence, the participants were purposively selected because they were accessible and had the qualities and experiences required to give meaning to the study and make for in- in-depth investigation.

The participants were also purposively selected because they have the experiences and qualities important to the research questions. The participants are chosen intentionally or for a purpose because the researcher wants participants with the best information relevant to the research because of their knowledge or experience and where a random selection of participants might not give the desired results. Purposive sampling is also relevant when resources to conduct research are scarce. In the case of this study, the researcher intentionally chose purposive sampling because the

participants possess the experiences and qualification necessary to enrich the research and address the research questions. Moreover, the proximity of these countries to each other reduced the research costs associated with travel, accommodation, language barriers and data collection. Using two countries with similar experiences allowed the researcher to compare experiences of administrators and their responses to educational governance in periods of crisis. Purposive sampling is popularly used in qualitative research for effectiveness where resources are limited (Patton, 2002). Since purposive sampling can be susceptible to research bias because selection is based on the researcher's judgement, to conform to ethical requirements, each participant was requested to sign an informed request form. Participants purposively selected consented to participate by signing the inform consent forms provided indicating their willingness to participate in the study and consent to the protection of their privacy. Data collection methods, confidentiality procedures and verification policies were explained and properly communicated to participants prior to the data collection.

According to Bernard (2002) the willingness to participate, availability and ability to reflectively communicate experiences and opinions is added advantage in purposive sampling. This contrasts with random sampling where the objective is to generalize findings by reducing the potential bias and control. Purposive sampling is important when the researcher intends to achieve depth of understanding rather than breadth, a key objective of the current study.

Data Collection Method

Data were collected on location in Liberia and Sierra Leone using semi-structured, recorded interviews. The interviews consisted of open-ended questions developed and administered to participants by the researcher. The researcher used interviews because they have the propensity to derive understandings of their life experiences and give meanings to them.

Interviews were essential to the study because they allowed for a thorough examination of real-world characteristics that cannot be discovered by experimenting. Semi-structured open-ended questions were developed based on the research questions selected for this study and posed to participants. The questions were not meant to be exhaustive but served as a guide for the recorded interviews. These semi-structured open-ended interview questions allowed the researcher the opportunity to conduct follow up questions to obtain further information germane to the research questions (Creswell & Clarke, 2011). Interviews are essential forms of data collection in qualitative research because they keep participants focused on their experiences (Bliss, 2016). A principal factor underpinning the decision to use qualitative methods for this study was based on the need for the researcher to examine various methods to decide what works best for the study. This researcher was also guided by administrative theories as the best approach for this study because they embodied all the elements of administration and challenges to give objective meaning to the study by addressing the research questions, purpose, and objective. The study utilized semi-structured interviews to derive meaning from the data. This is important because this method allows the researcher to explore participants' answers, analyze them, and provide an understanding of their experiences and opinions. The semi-structured interviews were best suited to develop richness from participants' experiences as administrators and policy makers functioning in conflict and post-conflict environments in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In the semi-structured interview, an interviewer generally has a framework of themes to be explored. In the case of this study, these themes were clearly outlined in the research guide and closely followed during the interview process. Where necessary, the researcher pursue responses by additional related questions to garner more in-depth understanding.

The data was collected in two phases. Phase one centered on semi-structured interviews with participants from two public universities in Liberia, the University of Liberia in Monrovia and the William V.S. Tubman University in Harper, Maryland County, Liberia. The University of Liberia and the William V.S. Tubman University are located four miles apart at almost two extremes off the coast of Liberia. They were selected because they embodied the full representation of public higher education institutions in Liberia. Both universities have students and administrators of diverse backgrounds and operated before and after the Liberian civil war. The University of Liberia is the oldest public institution of higher learning in Liberia, established in 1862 and the William V. S. Tubman University is the second oldest established in 1978. These institutions differ from all other public higher learning institutions which were established after the civil war. The existence of these institutions before and after the civil war afforded the participants the unique opportunity to share experiences before and after the war.

Phase two of the data collection process was carried out in Sierra Leone with participants at the University of Sierra Leone in Freetown and Njala University in Njala, Sierra Leone. The University of Sierra Leone is the oldest in West Africa and the Njala University is second largest public university in Sierra Leone. The University of Sierra Leone was founded as Fourah Bay College in 1827 and Njala University in 1964. The University of Sierra Leone and Njala University are the two oldest public institutions of higher learning in Sierra Leone and the most populous. These Public Universities, like the ones used for this study in Liberia, also existed before and after the Sierra Leonean civil war. Protocols for data collection were strictly adhered to and no illiterate or underage children requiring adult consent or interpreters participated in this study due to the criteria set for participants.

During the interview process, for accuracy and avoidance of any electronic mishaps, the researcher used two recording devices, a tape recorder and a smart telephone, while notetaking was done simultaneously. Memos were made after each interview. The iterative process of this research method was derived from the onset of data collection. Making memos enabled the researcher to establish phases between the coding and writing of the first draft. These memos also helped with the manual coding process because the researcher used them as reminders to reflect on analytical thoughts during the data collection process, which were helpful in data analysis and interpretation. Memo taking conforms to Charmaz (2014) iterative process of mixing data collection with analysis. This iterative process of notetaking and recording is critical since qualitative research is suitable to tackle research questions that are difficult using more constructed and less flexible designs (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). Note-taking is also significant to research interviews because it assists the researcher to concentrate on the participants' responses of their experiences which are relevant to the research questions. Note taking also ensures the researcher grasp possible conflicting statements to as follow-up questions (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

Interviews are making essential forms of data collection in case studies because they keep the participants focused on their experiences (Bliss, 2016). A principal factor underpinning the decision to use qualitative methods for this study was based on the need for the researcher to examine various methods to decide what works best for the study. This researcher used case study guided by administrative theories as the best approach because it embodies elements of sound qualitative research which gives objective meaning to the study by addressing the research purpose and objective. Using semi-structured interviews in a case study allowed the researcher to explore participants' answers, analyze them and provide understanding to their experiences and opinions.

It is best suited to derive richness from participants experiences as administrators and policy makers operating in conflict and post-conflict contexts in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

This qualitative approach allowed the researcher and participant to construct meaning to the interpretation and of their experiences (Charmaz, 2006). The object of qualitative research is to make connections and understanding in research involving human people which is complex because it requires going beyond the obvious to understand how one aspect of a phenomenon gives meaning to another and provide insights into this complexity (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

To enrich the research, the researcher employed a case study design to respond to questions of why and how something happened when addressing occurrences in their natural setting. A case study design was selected as appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to address real life situations of challenges in administration of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone dealing with post conflict situations. It also allowed the researcher to compare the perspectives of administrative practices and leadership qualities of administrators and policy makers in four public universities in two countries with similar circumstances. This permitted the study to conform to Starman (1997) assertion that a case study is adequate for research of this sort since it deals with a particular group of higher education administrators working under abnormal circumstances.

A case study is a comprehensive study of a particular subject, event, person, organization or phenomenon. It is normally used in qualitative research to examine an identifiable problem. While there are different types of case studies, this study utilized an explanatory case study which allows the researcher to examine something to identify themes and find new outcomes.

Case studies are useful for describing situations and how they are experienced by individuals (Yin, 2016). This case study examined the perceptions of real-life administrative

challenges of Public higher education administrators in post-conflict societies and provided in-depth understanding of how these challenges were handled and leadership styles employed. A case study is appropriate for this study because it affords the researcher the opportunity to compare experiences of public Higher Education administrators operating in two separate places under the same circumstances and time. Moreover, case study is appropriate because it allows for thematic coding and continuous comparison for data analysis. Research designs are processes for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data. Creswell, Plato and Clarke (2007) suggested that once a researcher selects a research approach for a study, the succeeding step is to decide the specific design that responds to the problem. Consequently, case study research can use interviews when it is appropriate for explanatory research where the case study is used clearly as a research design (Eisenhardt, 1989 & Yin, 2003). The researcher chose this approach to find out the similarities and differences between how post- conflict higher education was administered in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The researcher conducted 20 in-person recorded interviews in four universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone which lasted between 45 to 60 minutes each. Ten interviews were conducted in Liberia and ten in Sierra Leone. During the interview process, for accuracy and avoidance of any electronic mishaps, the researcher used two recording devices, a tape recorder and smart telephone, while notetaking was done simultaneously. Memos were made after each interview. The iterative process of this research method is derived from the onset of data collection. Making memo enabled the researcher to establish phases between the coding and writing of the draft. These memos also helped with the coding process because the researcher could use them as reminders to reflect on analytical thoughts during the data collection process which could be helpful in the data analysis and interpretation. Memo taking conforms to Charmaz, (2014) iterative process of mixing data

collection with analysis. This iterative process of notetaking and recording is critical since qualitative research is suitable to tackle research questions that are difficult using more constructed and less flexible research designs (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). Note taking is also significant to research interviews because it assists the researcher to concentrate on the participants' responses of their experiences important to the research questions. Notetaking also ensures the researcher grasp possible conflicting statements to ask follow-up questions (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015).

The data collected was triangulated using data from different participants with a variety of experiences and background operating at different periods of the conflict to improve the validity of the study. Triangulation is the use of different data sources in qualitative research to derive an understanding of a phenomenon (Patton, 1999). Triangulation is also used in qualitative research as an approach to test validity by merging information from diverse sources. By triangulating the data, the researcher was able to compare the data from various sources by closely examining the data obtained from different participants. The data collected was coded thematically, which provided the researcher with the opportunity to decipher the data and make it manageable for critical analysis by compiling and contrasting similarities and differences to find patterns and themes related to the research questions.

Population and Sample of the Research Study

Purposive sampling is used in this study because of its usefulness in identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals with knowledge and experiences about the subject of interest. Creswell & Clark (2011) noted that it is effective when dealing with limited resources and individuals knowledgeable and willing to participate and communicate their experiences and opinions. Purposive sampling is a non-probability method used to select participants from a sampling body because they possess characteristics the researcher is interested in examining. It

does not seek any statistical inference but seeks understanding. Purposive sampling starts with specific characteristics the researcher has, which allows for finding participants with a variety of those characteristics (Dicarlo, 2018). In essence, the participants were purposively selected because they are accessible and have the qualities required to give meaning to the study through their experiences which make for an in-depth investigation. Selected participants were written for permission to participate in the research and were required to indicate their willingness by filling in an informed consent form. Data collection methods, confidentiality and verification policies were also communicated to the participants.

Numerous researchers have addressed considerations of sample size in qualitative research adequate to derive at validity on the study. Boddy (2016), Weller et al. (2018) and Quest et al. (2020) agreed that 12 to 16 interviews or interviews in multiple of tens were adequate to achieve saturation. Twenty participants were purposively selected, with ten participants from Liberia and Sierra Leone, respectively. This number of participants are chosen because the researcher believes it is large enough to adequately explain and provide relevant information on the research topic and address the research questions. Moreover, it is large enough to provide a wide range of opinions and reach saturation without having the risk of being too repetitive. In qualitative research, the number of participants normally chosen for studies using interviews are 12 to 16 or 20-30 which are sufficient to reach saturation, which is the point when no new information or less than one new item per participant is being collected. Padama, (2021), Boddy, (2016) & Weller et al (2018). The participants are drawn from a population of about 112 drawn from a list of public Higher Education administrators in four Universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone, namely, the University of Liberia, William V.S. Tubman University, the University of Sierra Leone, and Njala University.

Each participant was written a letter explaining the research topic, purpose, data collection procedures and ethical considerations, expectations of the participants, and requirements to fill in an informed consent form. Individuals selected to participate in this research study had generally over 12-20 years working experience in higher education administration, serving in capacities of Universities' Presidents, Vice Chancellors, Vice Presidents, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Ministers of Education, Administrators of National Commissions on Higher Education, and professors before and after the conflicts. The participants served in their various capacities between four to ten years. Some served intermittently as administrators of public higher education institutions and policymakers. Information on participants was gotten from directories of the institutions and public records or recommended by knowledgeable people to participate in the study. Ten participants were selected from each country to fit the categories designated.

Sample Size

In qualitative research, it is necessary for the researcher to comprehend the characteristics of the participants and their physical and social environment to develop a sampling frame. Based on the objectives of this study, purposive sampling strategies were utilized to derive understanding from the participants' experiences. Research shows that purposive sampling is more efficient in qualitative studies than random selection, corroborating related arguments long advanced by qualitative methodologists. For many qualitative studies, size is a principal factor when evaluating the output quality and reliability, or, as Vasileoiu et al. (2018) assert, an important characteristic necessary for qualitative research. Regardless of the sampling technique used, the size of the sample must be appropriate and sufficient to explain the phenomenon of the study. Decisions on the number of units to be included in a sample should be made either before or after through an approach that changes according to the circumstances, according to saturation (Sim et al., 2018).

Vasileiou et al. (2018) claimed that the composition's relevance of cases, information, and sample size which explain the data, quality, and quantity of the phenomenon are the best indicators of a study's appropriateness. As a result, numbers are also very significant.

Additionally, there are no specific guidelines or methods that show the researcher how to obtain an appropriate sample size in qualitative research (Kindsiko & Poltimäe, 2019), Malterud et al., 2015; van Rijnsoever, 2017). A minimal size that is still based on a "reasonable" coverage of the studied occurrence is suggested by Patton (2002). To determine whether the sample size is appropriate or not, many researchers use the concept of saturation, which was originally used in grounded theory (Malterud et al., 2015) and Sandelowski, 1995). This principle states that a sample is the right size if it is sufficient to answer the research's questions and fulfill the study's objectives. Weller et al. (2019) suggested that using relevance as saturation after observing a direct correlation between importance and dominance of an element, theme, or behavior in the studied population. If the goal of the research is to explore the most dominant ideas, the sample size can be 10 units, or it can be larger if the goal is to explore a wider range of ideas, according to this use of the saturation tool. According to Sandelowski (2001), the sample size should be large enough to get a deep understanding of the subject under study, but small but relevant enough to ensure the profound case-focused examination is not excluded. However, various researchers have suggested adequate numbers based on the experience of qualitative research. Morse (2000) recommends that the more utilizable data collected from each participant, the fewer participants are needed based on the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, the quality of the data and study design. Guest et al. (2006) used 60 interviews for analysis and discovered that thematic saturation was reached by the twelfth interview while Francis et al (2010) achieved saturation by their 17th interview. Other researchers demonstrated that data saturation was reached between 16-24 interviews (Hennink et

al. 2017). In qualitative research, the objective is not to understand how much but to determine themes and patterns to understand the why rather than the amount.

The sample size is acceptable when data saturation is reached. According to Vasileiou et al. (2018), in qualitative research, samples are often small to support the depth sample size representative of case-oriented analysis that is central to this form of enquiry. Furthermore, qualitative samples are chosen for their ability to provide rich information pertinent to the topic under investigation. According to qualitative research professionals, there is no simple answer to the question of how many, and sample size is dependent on a variety of epistemological, methodological, and practical considerations (Baker & Edwards, 2018). Sandelowski (2001) states qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to allow for the development of the latest and completely developed knowledge of the phenomenon under research, but small enough to allow for deep, case-focused investigation of qualitative data. Morse (2000) stated that the more useful data acquired from each person, the fewer participants are required. Consequently, this study used purposive sampling to attain information-rich data based on the selected sample size. In qualitative research, the sample size is conditional and based on the scientific model in which the investigation is being conducted. Accordingly, qualitative research is concerned with positivism, which necessitates larger samples than in-depth qualitative research to obtain a representative image of the entire population under consideration. Nonetheless, sample sizes including a single case can be highly informative and relevant. Theoretical saturation can also be used as a guide in structuring qualitative research, with actual studies demonstrating that data saturation can occur in samples of twelve in a generally identical group (Brody, 2016). According to Creswell (1998) the number of questions and how they are organized in qualitative interviewing can influence the quality of data

collected, and therefore also requires careful consideration. Empirical research demonstrates that open-ended questions asked during the interview create detail data (Ogden, 2016).

The topic of the study, the questions it must address, complexity of the study, theoretical framework, the nature of the approach utilized in the study, methods used, the structure of the research population, and other factors all have an impact on the determination of sample size in quality research. Other considerations are access to participants, the time and resources available to complete the investigation, etc. (Mocanasu, 2020). These characteristics are grouped together by methodologists into two broad categories, firstly the constrictions related to epistemological and methodological concerns and secondly limits related to practical research considerations. When deciding whether a sample size is sufficient, researchers should place the most emphasis on the first group, which highlights the inherent deciding dynamics of research projects: appropriateness (Flick, 2012). Experts in qualitative research like Brody, (2016), Ogden, (2016) and Mocanasu, (2020) contend that there are no simple answers to the question of "how many" and that sample size depends on a variety of epistemological, methodological, and practical considerations. According to Sandelowski (2001), sample sizes for qualitative research should be both large enough to foster the development of a new and abundant quality and understanding of the phenomenon being investigated and small enough to allow for a profound, case-focused enquiry of the qualitative data. Morse (2000) believed that fewer participants are required, the more useful data is gathered from each participant.

The civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone and successive changes in government occasioned the rapid turnover of heads of public higher education institutions in these countries. Administrators, departmental heads, and policy makers, such as heads of commissions for higher education or ministers of education who served or chaired these commissions, past and present

vice chancellors or presidents, were selected to participate. The sample size of twenty (20) interviewees from the University of Liberia, the William V.S. Tubman University, the University of Sierra Leone and Njala University was drawn from a population of one hundred and twelve participants who met the criteria for selection based on their working experiences in higher education as a policy maker or administrator before, during or after the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The sample was purposively selected because the researcher sought to gain detailed knowledge about a precise phenomenon from a particular group of administrators serving at a particular period. The number of interviews conducted was based on the realization that this number could provide data rich enough to answer the research questions. The sample size was considered adequate to reach the point of saturation. As much as possible, the researcher made the sample size representative.

The sample size of twenty enabled the researcher to conduct interviews which are useful since there is little information available on the present study and the researcher obtained more relevant information from respondents based on their experience. For this study, the researcher used a sample size of twenty participants from four public universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The participants included past and current Vice Chancellors/Presidents, policy makers, and administrators. However, the researcher employed assistance of respondents if the point of saturation was not reached. Saturation is that point in the data collection process where no added information seems to emerge from the data collection process. Qualitative researchers use systematic analysis and sampling theory to address the problems of saturation in research involving life histories. Weller et al., (2018), Hennink, & Kaiser, (2019), Malterud et al. (2016) state that saturation applies to purposive non-probability sampling used in qualitative research to assess

validity and quality and indicate the more information a sample contains for a study, the smaller number of participants required.

Inclusion Criteria

This study sought to examine administrative challenges of public higher education institutions in post conflict societies of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Specifically, the work involved participants who had a wide range of views about higher education administrative challenges in post -conflict societies of Liberia and Sierra Leone as case studies. Some of the participants served prior to and after the wars as Vice Chancellors, Presidents, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Vice Presidents, registrars, Ministers of Education and Commissioners of the National Commissions on Higher Education, (NCHE). These participants were selected based on their track records of service from documents containing public information, accessibility and willingness to participate. Others were recommended based on the knowledge of their services in higher education administration and policy making prior to the wars and after.

Exclusion Criteria

Participants in this study excluded all administrators of private higher institutions of learning and non-degree-granting institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, regardless of whether they operated during the civil conflicts or immediately after, because the object of the study were public higher institutions of learning. Students and junior staffers were also excluded because they were not decision and policy makers in those institutions. The study also excluded non-degree-granting public operated post -secondary technical and vocational institutes.

Participants for the study comprised current and past Presidents and Vice Chancellors of Liberia and Sierra Leone, Vice Presidents and Deputy Vice Chancellors, Liberia and Sierra Leone, Ministers of Education of Liberia and Sierra Leone, and past and Present Chairpersons of National

Commissions for Higher Education, (NCHE) in Liberia, National Commission on Tertiary Education, NCTE in Sierra Leone and administrators of the various institutions. These represented a cross-section of participants selected for the study.

Table 3

Participants Category in Selected Universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Respondents	Liberia (No)	Sierra Leone (No)	Total No
Presidents/Vice Chancellors	2	2	4
Vice Presidents/Deputy Vice Chancellors	2	2	4
Former Presidents/Former Vice Chancellors	1	1	2
Ministers of Education	1	1	2
Commissioners of Higher Education/Tertiary Commission (past and current)	2	2	4
Administrators	2	2	4
Total			20

Table 3.1 showed ten participants were selected from Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively. These participants cut across the spectrum of administrators and policy makers operating in Liberia and Sierra Leone before, during and after the civil conflicts in these countries.   Most of them had served in several capacities in higher education administration in the countries selected for study.

Table 4

Gender Inclusion of Participants

Country	No of males	Number of females	Total
Liberia	8	1	10
Sierra Leone	8	1	10
Total number participants gender	16	4	20
Total number of participants			20

An examination of the gender of participants selected for this study within the specified criteria showed there were sixteen males and four females.   It was difficult to maintain a gender balance among the participants selected for the study. Despite the advances women have made professionally, they are grossly underrepresented in roles of leadership and policy decision-making in higher education in Africa. Of the nine public higher education institutions in Liberia in 2022, there are no female presidents. The case in Sierra Leone was similar up to the year 2022, where all vice chancellors were males. The first female Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Sierra Leone was appointed in 2022, two hundred years after the founding of the institution (University of Sierra Leone Website, 2022). Since the establishment of the University of Liberia in 1961, there have been only two female presidents. In 2022, one third of the University of Liberia's nine vice presidents were women. At the William V. Tubman University and Njala University of Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively, there are no female vice presidents or deputy vice chancellors. The gender inclusiveness in higher education administration in Liberia and Sierra Leone is disproportionate and skewed in favor of males. While the lack of females in higher education administration and decision may not be deliberate, issues of academic qualification, cultural norms, and practices which restrict women's access to post graduate higher education could be some

factors. Attempts have been made to close the gender parity gap but more needs to be done in areas of higher education. Enrollment of females in university and colleges worldwide indicated an increase by 9% between 2011 and 2019 but there are wider gaps in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2020).

Gender parity in Higher education leadership in Liberia and Sierra Leone is not highly documented. Statistics showed men outnumber women in leadership positions. Nyoni & He (2019) indicated that women are underrepresented in higher education leadership because society determined males make good leaders even though there is a need for more transparency in processes of recruitment, promotions, a good gender management system and structures of empowerment.

Statistics also show only 24% of all academic staff in Sub-Saharan Africa are women (UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2019). In-depth studies of gender parity in higher education in Liberia and Sierra Leone are scanty. UNESCO's Institute for statistics (2022) gross gender parity index for tertiary education showed 0.62% for Liberia and 0.42 for Sierra Leone. The academic qualifications of participants selected for the study showed that over two thirds of the participants had terminal degrees, while one fourth were graduates with master's degrees.

Table 5

Categories of Selected Universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone by Age, Programs, and Degrees

Offered

Country	Institution	Location	Year established	No. of degree-granting programs	Highest Degree
Liberia	University of Liberia	Monrovia. Liberia	1862	27	Masters
	W.V.S. Tubman University	Harper, Liberia	1971	17	Masters
Sierra Leone	University of Sierra Leone	Freetown	1927	13	Ph.D.
	Njala University	Njala, Sierra Leone	1964	11	Ph.D.

The four public higher education institutions of learning selected for this study from Liberia

and Sierra Leone, as shown in Table 4 were based on prominence, number of years in existence,

number of students, and programs offered. Until 1971, the University of Liberia was the only

public university in Liberia that attracted large numbers of students because tuition and fees

were more reasonable compared to private Church-owned institutions like Cuttington College.

Students from over Liberia traveled to Monrovia to seek higher education despite difficulties of

securing accommodation, inability to pay tuition and fees, and isolation from family members.

These students experienced the environmental shocks of city life which differ vastly from what

they were used to in rural areas. In Sierra Leone, the situation was not different. Fourah Bay

college was established one hundred and forty-seven years (147) before Njala University.

Originally, Njala college was a part of the University of Sierra Leone until it was separated in

2005 by an act of parliament.

Materials/Instruments of the Research

Qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings and endeavor to make sense of the meaning people bring to these phenomena. Qualitative research is conducted using various methods or tools which assist the researcher in gathering information necessary for a study (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Qualitative research commences with assumptions and interpretation using theoretical frameworks that inform the study conducted in natural settings "sensitive "to the research participants and their surroundings. The final reports from this qualitative study reflect the participants' views and researcher's description and interpretation of the problem (Creswell & Pott (2018). Research tools are selected based on what the researcher seeks to discover. Jamshed (2014), referencing Berkley and Chiang (1976), explains methodology as a plan a researcher uses to map out an approach to find solutions to specific problems. In qualitative studies, a research tool is deemed suitable when the researcher explores a new area of study to discover new knowledge. Azungah (2018) stated that qualitative research approach is inductive and design to give depth and meaning to words derived from purposeful sampling which can be interpreted by the researcher. Consequently, the data produced is within the context of the participants who are to be understood through their behavior, values and beliefs from specific contexts of where the research is being conducted. Hence, the essence of the data is that it helps the purpose of the research.

Qualitative research employs various tools to collect data relevant to a particular study (Creswell & Pott, 2018). Some of these tools are interviews, focus groups, observation, case study, content analysis and recorded conversation. According to Azungah (2018) interviews gauge individual experiences in rich details while focus groups produce insights into shared experience through group discussions. In-depth interviews are a versatile form of qualitative data collection

used by researchers across the social sciences. They allow for explanation in their own words of how they understand and interpret the world around them. Interviews provide opportunities for social interaction through the proffering and answering of questions. Interviews are a special type of exchange guided by the researcher to achieve specific ends Knott et al. (2022). Observation allows the researcher to learn about behavior in their natural settings. Semi-structured interviews make it possible to obtain adequate information, opinions, and ideas about the subject being studied since the sample size is small. In other words, semi-structured interviews are more flexible than other forms of interviews because they permit the researcher -to have direct access to the interviewee and this enriches the research study by drawing out extensive relevant information of social and personal experiences. DiCicco- Bloom (2006) opined that semi-structure interviews provide the framework to examine and make comparisons of several cases. This study elicited information of respondents regarding experiences of administrators of public Higher Education Institutions in post conflict situations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Dicicco-Bloom (2006) underscored the importance of semi-structured interviews of qualitative data collection and analysis process when they asserted that "the iterative nature of the qualitative research process in which preliminary data analysis coincides with data collection often results in altering questions as the investigators learn more about the subject. Questions that are not effective at eliciting the necessary information can be dropped and new ones added.

The instrument selected for data collection, for this qualitative study, is a semi-structured interview based on a scripted and approved interview guide which accorded the researcher the opportunity to explore the perceptions, opinions, and experiences of administrators in the four public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The purpose of an interview is to find out the "views or experiences, beliefs and /or motivations" on a matter of concern. The

purpose of qualitative research interviews is to provide conceptual and theoretical information to the body of knowledge rooted in participants' life experiences (Dicicco-Bloom & Cartree, 2006). Hence, interviews are important for research requiring small sample sizes in situations where little is known, or the available information is insufficient (Knott, et al., 2022). However, Knott et al (2022) point out that interviews can be used alone or mixed with other methods but cautions that whatever the form an interview takes, researchers should consider the dynamics between the participants and researcher and include them in the data collection process. This researcher chose to use semi-structured interviews as a stand-alone to garner information on the experiences and knowledge of the participants.

Semi-structured interviews, lasting 45 minutes to one hour, were administered to all participants individually at separate periods in distinct locations. In all but one case, the locations were campuses of the universities under study. The use of semi- structured interviews guided the data collection process and kept the researcher focused on the research questions. The interviews were conducted using open-ended interview questions which allowed for detailed responses. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with a small group of targeted respondents interviewed separately (Adams, 2015). For data collection using semi-structured interviews, the researcher balances an understanding of research questions since data collection and data analysis occur almost simultaneously. Salihu (2016) postulated that there is a linkage between the data collection method and data analysis which does not preclude the beliefs and experiences of the researcher which makes it important for the researchers to eliminate their own biases and ensure they do not influence research outcomes.

Enormous efforts were made to consult previously used peer reviewed work on similar topics which used semi-structured interviews as a research tool. However, the researcher found no

existing published validated semi-structured interview instrument adaptable for this study, thereby making it imperative that a research instrument be designed which aligns with the research aims and objectives. The research instrument used in this study was developed by the researcher and validated by scholars in the faculty of education to get rid of weak entries. Hence, for both content and face validity, the items indicated in the interview questions were corrected to match the research questions. Consequently, the researcher effected the corrections pointed out by the scholars which made it possible to administer the instrument during the actual interviews.

Issues addressed in the research interview guide were inclusive of personal data to determine participants' characteristics, administrative challenges, quality assurance, political influences, leadership effectiveness and mitigations strategies. Jamshed (2014) asserts that an interview guide is a list of topics a researcher covers or tries to find answers for. The interview guide was divided into several parts, the first part contained questions on participants' personal information, the second on the specific administrative challenges relating to finance, policy constraints, infrastructure and facilities, while the third and fourth dealt with quality assurance, leadership qualities and political influence. The sixth part contained questions on mitigating strategies used to overcome the challenges encountered.

Study Procedures and Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles underpinning this research project are rooted in generally accepted norms pertaining to the rights and protection of participants as inscribed in International Ethical Guides for Health-Related Research Involving Human Subjects (2016) and the UNICAF Research Ethics Committee (UREC), Policy. Unicaf University insists its students also adhere to the International Guidelines for Research with Human Subjects prepared by the Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences, (CIOMS), in collaboration with the World Health Organization,

(WHO) and Guidelines for Health-Related Research Involving Human Subjects, Geneva, (2016) which provides how ethical principles enshrined in the Declaration of Helsinki of the World Medical Association should be utilized, especially in low resource settings. Unicaf University also ascribes to international standards governing social science research enshrined in the Code of Practice for Research Involving Human Participants, published by the United Nations World Health Organization Research Ethics Review Committee (ERC), (2000), which the UNICAF University adopts.

For this study, direct experiment with human subjects was not necessary. As a result, the researcher applied ethical principles of voluntary participation, participants' anonymity, confidentiality, privacy, informed consent, data security and utmost respect for rights. Before conducting the study, the researcher was required to fill in Research Ethics Application Forms (REAF), which were completed and submitted for approval by the Research Supervisor in accordance with the REAF guidelines. The forms initially approved were submitted to the UNICAF Research Ethics Committee, UREC, for approval prior to the data collection process. The REAF was subsequently approved by the Unicaf Research Ethics Committee "without revision and comments". This approval by the UREC granted the researcher appropriate authorization to proceed with the data collection process.

Ethical Assurances

Many qualitative researchers, interested in explorative studies, develop interview questions that are research specific instead of using surveys or questionnaires which makes the researcher the main investigator in the study. The researcher, through interaction or communication becomes the principal medium through which participants share their experiences (Chenail, 2011). This makes it difficult for some researchers to be objective and avoid biases which threaten the quality

of the research. For this study, the researcher developed the initial research guide which was peered reviewed to reduce biases since the researcher worked in higher education administration. The peer-reviewed research guide was modified and revised, taking into consideration comments from the supervisor, and submitted to the UNICAF's Ethics Committee for approval which was obtained prior to the data collection process. This process, which includes addressing issues of researcher's affinity to the subject matter, is intended to avoid or minimize the researcher's bias. To avoid any possible research bias, the researcher opted to distribute interview transcripts with participants to ascertain that their views are accurately captured. Participants were afforded the opportunity to add or omit any information deemed necessary or unnecessary.

Participants' anonymity was safeguarded by the researcher, who assured the respondents that nothing published in print during seminars or lectures would be traceable to them or reveal their identity. Anonymity in the narrative of the findings was ensured by assigning each participant a two-letter alphabetical code commencing with the letter P for participant. The subsequent letter was assigned to participants based on the sequence of the interviews conducted. The alphabetical assignment to participants was to protect their identity in keeping with ethical requirements. The data was collected solely by the researcher and contained no identifiers beyond what is required for the research. Data was secured, backed up, stored, and kept with the strictest confidence. The information contained in the research document did not contain any direct quotations that can be accredited to anyone in keeping with ethical standards of confidentiality and participants' rights to privacy. The participants knew from the onset that data collected from any participant who chose to withdraw from this research study would not be included in the study. In the case of this study, no one withdrew from the study. However, transcripted copies of the recorded interviews were shared with each participant of acquiescence and to ensure the data was accurate and represented

their views. Each participant in the study consented to participate by filling in an informed consent document detailing the rights of participants, specifying their understanding of the research to be undertaken, and their rights.

The researcher was not part of the research study and endeavored not to influence the findings in any way. Though the researcher worked in the research environment of the participants, care was taken to ensure cordial relations between the researcher and participants to build trust and obtain maximum information from the participants. The researcher was particularly mindful that most of the interviews occurred in the work environment, which situations could influence. The researcher's responsibility in this study was basically the selection of the research topic, research design, research questions, selection of participants, conducting the interviews, determining research designs, instruments of analysis and interpretation of the data. Findings from the research were shared with the participants to ascertain that the information contained in the transcripts accurately represented the views they expressed to ensure external validity.

Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative Data was collected within one month of the receipt of the official UREC approval. The data collection was done in two phases. Phase one centered on direct interviews with respondents at two public universities in Liberia, the University of Liberia in Monrovia and the Tubman University in Harper, Maryland County, Liberia. These universities are located four hundred miles apart, along the coast of Liberia. They were selected because they embodied the full representation of public higher education in Liberia. Both universities have students and administrators of diverse backgrounds and operated before and after the Liberian civil war. Phase two, on the other hand, dealt with data collection in Sierra Leone with participants located at the University of Sierra Leone in Freetown, the oldest university in West Africa and the second

largest public university in Sierra Leone, Njala University in Njala. The data collection process for this study ensured protocols for data collection, analysis, interpretation and storage were communicated in detail to participants and accepted. The researcher communicated with each participant in writing informing them of the nature of the research study and requested their permission to participate. Informed consent forms were administered to each participant and duly signed. This procedure did not require the use of an interpreter as all participants were educated. Interviews are essential forms of data collection in case studies because they keep participants focused on their experiences (Bliss. 2016). A principal factor underpinning the choice of qualitative method for this case study was the need for the researcher to examine various methods to decide what works best for the study. This researcher used semi-structured interviews as the best approach for this study because it embodies all the elements of sound qualitative research which gave objective meaning to the study by addressing the research purpose, and objectives. This study utilized interpretation to derive meaning from the data. This is important because it allowed the researcher to obtain participants' answers, analyze them and provide understanding of their experiences and opinions.

Though the interviews were electronically recorded, the researcher also relied on personal note taking during the interviews and memo writing after. The researcher used the pragmatic approach of inductive thematic analysis to obtain themes from the data without any preconditions or ideas. This approach is useful for exploring people's knowledge about their experiences, assessment of their beliefs and understanding their interpretation of their experiences and the meanings they accord them with. According to Braun and Clarke (2022), inductive thematic analysis is when the researcher allows themes to emerge from the data without any preexisting theories. The researcher followed Braun and Clarke (2006) six steps to thematic analysis of

familiarization of the data, generation of codes and themes, revision and description of themes and report writing. The researcher familiarized herself with the data by repeatedly listening to the recordings and reading the transcripts. Similar ideas discovered from the data were coded based on their relevance to the research questions. Codes are the first list about the ideas in the data that could be of interest (Braun & Clarke, 2008). These codes were developed from the data based on shared meanings. The codes were developed into themes. Critical decisions on the constitution of a theme were made based on frequency across the data set, relevance to the research questions and dominance. The themes were organized based on their simplicity or generalization across the data. This approach is useful because it deepens the research by leading to the discoveries of new patterns or themes that could possibly go unnoticed. The data were coded thematically which provided the researcher with the opportunity to decipher the data and make it manageable for critical analysis by compiling and contrasting similarities and differences to find patterns and themes related to the research questions. To authenticate these themes, the research imported raw data into the computer assisted Software for qualitative data analysis, CAQDAS, Taguette to develop themes from the data. Taguette was used to identify concepts and development of themes from the data for categorization, coding and ease of analysis. The themes were compared, reviewed and revised for description. The themes were sorted out and organized into main or global themes and sub- themes based on points in the data related to them. These sets were examined again to be able to regroup them. Once these themes were grouped and described, they were organized based on frequencies and importance to the research questions and objectives. The themes acknowledged specific areas of the data and said something about them by capturing something of relevance to the research questions. Though some themes appeared less frequently, the researcher was flexible to consider all themes related to the research question. These themes

were further reviewed and refined to find out if the themes apply to the research questions and find any possible themes that could have been missed in the process for inclusion. This conforms to Braun and Clarke, (2006) thematic analysis, which allows the researcher to look at the data in different ways to examine one or several aspects of it in depth. The codes and themes are obtained from the data, so what is charted out by the researcher during the analysis is like those in the data.

The researcher then used thematic analysis to interpret the participants' statements from the transcripts of the interviews to gain insights or understanding about their beliefs, experiences, and behaviors during the period under study. The objective of a thematic analysis is to transform the personal stories of individuals into information that can be categorized and arranged in a way that allows researchers to comprehend the effects of a specific event, emotion, or choice on the individuals involved. Thematic analysis is also used to discover patterns or themes in the data that are repeated. This involves the interpretation of the data to find meaning and understand the different themes and their interpretation.

The researcher consistently read and reread the transcripts of the interviews and listened to the audio recordings to ensure nothing was inadvertently left out. Notes were made from the audio of the recordings and reading the transcripts, highlighting areas of interest while critically questioning how a participant's judgement of their experiences influenced the interpretation of their accounts. Initial observations were noted and recorded. This step enables the researcher to discern whether the data would make for adequate analysis by recognizing comments and generated codes relevant to the research questions. The codes were examined to find a research set representing a pattern aligned to the research questions. These were formed into themes and subthemes. The researcher then examined the themes to find out how they relate to exposing the actual story emerging from the data. These themes were reviewed to ensure they captured the most

important aspects of the data. The selected themes which related to the research questions were documented to be used to convey a narrative about the findings. These also included key quotations which support the claims of the data. Each theme was developed taking into full consideration the research questions. Following the analysis, the researchers could pinpoint specific fundamental stories that encapsulate the participants' experiences.

Summary

This chapter provided information on the research approach and design and gave justifications for the selection of a case study utilizing purposive sampling and interviews for data collection. The chapter provided information on the public institutions of higher education selected for the study and widespread characteristics of the participants of the study, selection protocols, and data collection methods. The chapter discussed key issues of research rigor, validity, and reliability. The chapter also addressed how the researcher managed ethical issues in conformity to internationally accepted ethical standards as prescribed by the UNICAF's Research Ethic Committee (UREC). Considerations were given to participants' confidentiality, informed consent, data security, and research concerning human persons.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter is organized along the following subheadings, the trustworthiness of the data, reliability, and validity of the data, Results, research questions, Evaluation of Findings, and Summary. This study examined the Challenges in the administration of public Higher Education in Liberia and Sierra Leone after over ten years of civil wars. The study sought the perceptions, opinions and experiences of administrators, policy makers and policy implementors in these institutions prior to, during and after the conflicts. More importantly, the study sought to find out, (1) specific challenges administrators were confronted with in managing public higher education institutions in post- conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone (2) responses to these administrative challenges (3) impacts of these Specific objectives of the study were to identify the challenges encountered by administrators in public higher education institutions in post conflict societies, ascertain the effects of post-war conflicts on the administration of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, find out the leadership styles of Administrators in the management of public higher education institutions in civil conflict situations and ascertain the measures that could be utilized by authorities of educational institutions during and in post - conflict environments.

The assumptions are that the study would provide for the examination of public higher education administration in post conflict societies, identify the strategies leaders adopted for the effective administration of these institutions leading to the addition of new knowledge and leadership approaches to the administration of public higher education institutions in conflicts environments globally. To undertake this study six categories of research questions were developed based on the objectives. A qualitative research interview guide was developed in conformity to protocols set by UNICAF University for the conduct of qualitative research. Semi-structured

interviews were conducted with each participant for periods ranging from 45 minutes to an hour. Participant categories covered past and current presidents, deputy vice chancellors, vice presidents, registrars, ministers of education, and heads of National Commissions on Higher Education in Liberia and Sierra Leone, respectively. Public higher education institutions selected for this study were the University of Liberia, William V. S. Tubman University in Liberia, and the University of Sierra Leone, and Njala University in Sierra Leone. Though the researcher followed the semi-structured questions on the interview guide, the researcher followed up those questions with probing questions on participants' comments of interest to get an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and opinions. All interviews were electronically recorded and professionally transcribed verbatim. The researcher used inductive coding based on the information coming from the data. The researcher was able to reflect on the nature of the interviews and structure them into recognizable themes for analysis. Coding enabled the researcher to comprehend information from the representative data and the actual stories behind it. Codes were given to the excerpts from the data, which were clustered together for future interpretation. The titles given to each code were developed out of the participants' responses to the interviews based on repetition of key words. The researcher used open coding to break down the data into codes signifying a category of excerpts. To support our coding system, we entered the same data in the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software, Taguette. The categories of codes developed were compared to those generated manually and the relevant codes selected for development into themes.

This chapter deals with the trustworthiness of the data, data reliability and validity, the findings, and evaluation of the study. Trustworthiness of the study is obtained by the degree of confidence in the data, data interpretation and the methods used to derive quality in the study (Pilot

& Beck, 2014). This chapter also established methods used to ascertain credibility, confidence, and consistency in the research. Results of the findings are presented and discussed, as well as the evaluation and interpretation of the data. Each unit of the data was assigned a unique code for easy analysis and interpretation. For larger data sets, the same codes were used to find repetitive patterns which were deliberate. The research sought to find repetitive patterns characteristic of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the process of searching the data to find and identify recurrent patterns, analyze, and interpret them. It is a process used to describe data but also entails interpretation and selecting codes and themes. Thematic analysis is flexible and applicable to a variety of epistemological and theoretical constructions, research questions, designs, and sample size (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Trustworthiness of the Data

Qualitative research is intended to create knowledge based on human experience. Therefore, data analysis process is the most difficult aspect of qualitative research and researchers need to be able to provide a clear description of their work, analytical approaches to arrive at conclusions and why these conclusions were reached, leading to trustworthiness of the data (Nowell et al. 2017). Trustworthiness of data in qualitative data analysis is established based on factors of credibility, transferable, dependability and confirmable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Hence, thematic analysis is a research method used to identify, organize, analyze, and report themes found in a set of data (Braun and Clark, 2006). The researcher applied principles of qualitative research to establish trustworthiness of the data by dependence on Rose et al. (2020), Johnson & Parry, (2015) and Stahl and King (2020) on principles for establishing rigor in qualitative research by examining the research design, credibility, and believability of the research findings and how the research methods are applied. To establish trustworthiness, the researcher spent quality time

familiarizing herself with the data to determine reliability and validity. Most qualitative researchers establish trustworthiness in their study by relying on criteria of credibility, dependability, and confirmability set by Lincoln and Guba (1985) (Braun and Clark (2006), Stahl and King (2020), and Rose and Johnson, (2020) to determine trustworthiness in qualitative research. Trustworthiness of a study refers to the rigor of the study occasioned by the amount of data confidence, interpretation of the data and study quality (Polit & Beck, 2014). In this study, data trustworthiness was also established by participants' free option to participate or withdraw from the study at any time and to offer opinions, ideas, or experiences free from cohesion. Transcribed copies of the interviews were submitted to the participants and cross-checked by them to ascertain their views were accurately represented, a suggested stipulation for data trustworthiness (Creswell, 2007). The participants confirmed their views and communicated the same to the researcher prior to the inclusion of this data in the study. This referral to participants was to establish the accuracy and factualness of the data. The accuracy of the data determined the credibility of the data. Apart from confirmation by participants of the accuracy of the transcription of the information contained in the transcripts of the interviews, the data obtained from different participants was triangulated to improve validity and credibility of the findings.

Theoretical Basis for Rigor in the Study

In the first instance, the researcher reviewed various administrative theories to establish a full understanding of leadership styles and practices that relate to the initial themes or concepts emerging from the data. Since the study is exploratory, there were no preconceived outcomes. From the onset, the researcher ensured that the quality of the research and the appropriateness of the method used would lend to the trustworthiness of the data. While the researcher used examples from various constructs, qualitative research involving thematic analysis does not require reliance

on any existing theories. Instead, the researcher relied on themes derived from the data.　　This study is purely exploratory and uses thematic analysis to derive themes from the data, which provided useful insights to the study. In general, qualitative research, using thematic coding and analysis, was recognized in the organization of data which could be voluminous. Yin (2003) and Stakes, (1995). Both Stakes (1995) and Yin (2003) developed separate methodologies for case study research but agreed that both approaches aim to make sure that the subject of interest is thoroughly examined and that the basic structure of the phenomenon basic is revealed (Baxter & Jack, 2010). Using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) is crucial when creating a case study database to facilitate data source information, organization, data storage and searchable abilities (Wickham & Woods, 2005). For a thorough examination of this study, the CAQDAS, Taguette supported the organization of the themes of the study.

These initial themes were reviewed and refined to determine their alignment with the research questions. This process allowed the researcher to establish patterns of trustworthiness to the study by identifying specific recurring themes in the interview data. New themes that appeared during the coding process were categorized for further analysis. The initial data was coded and developed into themes to enable the researcher to define recurring patterns, opinions, and concepts. This approach to data organization for validation is supported by Sinkovics, (2018) and Bouncken & Tiberius (2021), who recognized this method useful for the analysis of qualitative data to understand difficult ideas related to research questions, where the context and relationships are not easily understood as in the case of interview data (Slokovics,2018). These findings of the study juxtaposed emerging recurring themes along Fayol's theory of administrative management to determine administrative styles of managers in the handling of these complex challenges, which are aligned to the research questions. Fayol's management theory states organizations have

multiple functions to manage matters related to finance, commercial, technical, communication and staffing which make them function and bring the parts together to determine how efficiently they are managed so the success of any organization depends on the administrative ability of its leaders (Wren et al. 2002). Functioning effectively in normal situations differs from functioning in periods of conflict where the challenges extend beyond one's ability to balance administrative duties with conflict management and extenuating situations.

The researcher collected primary data from twenty participants in four public universities in two countries, Liberia and Sierra Leone which had experienced civil wars using recorded interviews. The researcher purposively selected administrators of these institutions with experience serving before during and after the civil wars in these countries based on their qualification, expertise, experience, and positions. The purposive sampling approach conformed to principles of appropriateness and adequacy by selecting participants who have the knowledge and experience about situations of interest for the study and were available and willing to participate (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Moreover, the participants were carefully selected because of the dependability of their experiences and opinions on the subject under study and the transparency and confidence they brought to the research.

Credibility

The researcher ensured credibility in the study by examining the characteristics of the data. In the case of this study, the data was generated from primary sources involved with administrative management and policy formulation of public higher education institutions which established truthfulness of the data and reduced chances of inaccuracy. The same research questions were asked of different participants in the study to grasp an understanding of their responses to the same phenomenon. Using various data sources enables the researcher to present the findings accurately

(Creswell, 2007). All interviews were recorded and transcribed independently by two transcribers. Completed transcripts were compared for consistency and sent to the participants for approval to warrant the transcribed information was true, accurate and represented the views they expressed. The accuracy of the data was important to ensure credibility. Certified transcripts were employed for data analysis.

To confirm trustworthiness of the data, the researcher also relied on principles of Lincoln & Guba (1985) who expressed trustworthiness as how much true value researchers place on the data, interpretation, and analysis; and laid the basis for trustworthiness in qualitative research as "credibility, transferability, dependability, and credibility." Consequently, confidence in the data was established by constantly re-reading the data for in-depth understanding, which allowed the researcher to synthesize the data and make a credible and accurate presentation of the analysis and interpretation of findings.

Objectivity

Objectivity in qualitative research generally refers to how accurate, detailed, complete, and objective the data is or how appropriate the data is in response to the research questions (Zahle, 2021). To ensure objectivity of the data, the researcher requested two non -non-participant academics to peer review the data and ascertain if they would arrive at similar interpretation. This process was to eliminate the possibility of the researcher's bias. A researcher's bias is when the researcher slants the research process to achieve specific results or influences the process to attain certain results. According to (Simundic, 2013), bias is any intentional or unintentional course or divergence from truthful data collection, data analysis, interpretation, and publication, which results to false conclusions. To avoid any biases, the researcher made conscious efforts not to influence the interview by holding it in an environment known to the participant. The semi-

structured interview questions were asked based on the interview guide with follow-up questions, where necessary, to minimize any possibilities of bias. More importantly, the participants had the opportunity to review the results of the research. Using triangulation or the use of multiple data sources also ensured the minimization of researcher's bias. The possibilities of cultural bias, which is the imposition of a researcher's cultural values and standards when evaluating people from different communities, were virtually impossible since as indicated in this dissertation, Liberia and Sierra Leone have similar cultures and history.

Dependability

The researcher ensured that the participants evaluated the findings, interpretations, and recommendations based on their expressed experiences and opinions. To ascertain the dependability of the findings and interpretation, the researcher subjected the study to an independent audit by peers to confirm the data findings, interpretation, and conclusion were supported by the data. Four independent researchers were requested to examine how the findings were arrived at and ascertain how the analysis, interpretations and conclusions were based on the data. The rationale for this exercise was to certify that the researcher objectively obtained the objectives of the study confirmed by an independent assessment.

Confirmability

The researcher provided adequate information on the nature of the interview, the participants, and the study environment to give readers the opportunity to understand the setting and decide whether the information given allowed the reader to transfer information contained in the study to a similar situation. As supporting evidence of the trustworthiness of the data relating to confirmability, the researcher used direct quotations from the participants to allow the data to speak for itself and minimize any possibility of the researcher's bias.

Reliability and Validity of the Data

The researcher used semi-structured interviews as instruments of data collection. The interview guide was developed, peer reviewed and tested in a pilot study. The guide was revised following the pilot study. The final research guide served as a basis for the interviews and was not exhaustive since the questions were open-ended. This was intended to allow the researcher to delve more into issues as they emerged during the interview process. The interview protocol or guide underwent several revisions during the data collection process as follow-up questions were included to solicit clarity and depth to the responses as new themes emerged. This trend, particularly observed during later interviews, is consistent with methods which indicate earlier interviews should form the basis for later interviews (Straus & Corbin, 1998). This approach enabled the researcher to derive relevant concepts from the participants' experiences which made it possible to develop codes about these experiences based on inductive methods of concept development Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Strauss & Corbin (1998). The Researcher relied on the four basic criteria of credibility, reliability, usefulness, and resonance to determine validity of this study (Charmaz, 2008). For credibility, the researcher familiarized herself with the data to ensure the developing themes were supported in the data. The results were described vividly, and caution exercised in capturing direct quotes from the participants to support findings aligned to the research questions. The originality requirement was satisfied by the new perspectives gained from the data. Moreover, the subject matter of this research study has not been explored extensively by previous studies. This study brings new dimensions to administrative challenges in the administration of higher public institutions of learning because it deals with the specifics of post-conflict challenges. This study highlights the perspectives of participants who have experienced challenges administering public higher education institutions or formulated policies affecting educational governance in conflict-related situations.

This study is useful because it draws attention to a phenomenon that has not been fully researched yet and has the potential to stimulate further research. Conflicts occur in various places around the world today and could have similar consequences for higher education administration, whether in public or private institutions. This study will be useful to higher education administrators as it provides an understanding of unique challenges experienced in post-conflict situations and how other administrators navigated them. The study will provide a rich understanding of new challenges and opportunities to transform public higher education governance. This study also has implications for current and future research. The recommendations proffered are also useful to stimulate future research and present new insights and knowledge.

Resonance refers to the capability of the researcher to explain the phenomena in ways that others can relate to it and clearly understand the researcher's interpretation. To make sure readers understand the interpretation, the researcher used both computer-assisted and manual coding by secondary coders to ensure the themes made sense to people other than the researcher with the expectation that others will understand and relate to the findings, analysis, and interpretation. The researcher used numerous direct quotes to demonstrate the actuality of the phenomena with linkages to the experiences that readers can relate to. This enables the researcher to present the perceptions and opinions of participants instead of reliance on pre-existing or conceived ideas or hypothesis. Education researchers adopted thematic analysis because of its appropriateness and compatibility with various data sources (Stough & Lee, 2021). The themes were reviewed repeatedly to narrow them down and grouped globally to allow for easy analysis.

The results of this study originated from the codes in the data which were further refined to themes. To ensure depth was obtained from the data, it was important to ensure that each theme

had sufficient concepts from the data to support it. The first codes were to get a general impression of the data and develop the first set of themes while the second themes were generated working with the qualitative data analysis software Taguette. These themes were scrutinized and merged into global themes and sub-themes for analysis and interpretation.

Results

This study explored the impacts of conflicts on the administration of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone referencing leadership theories and the results of findings gather through data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting. The presentation is organized in three parts. The first portion of the study addresses the research questions and presentations of the findings on challenges in the administration of public higher education institutions in post conflict societies. The first part also explains what participants considered their challenges as administrators or policy makers based on the first research question. The second section deals with strategies used to mitigate these challenges and the leadership styles of these administrators and policymakers. The third section delves into resultant policies and approaches necessitated by these challenges.

Four research questions were used to guide this study. The findings and analyses are organized around these questions. To provide an in-depth understanding of the findings, the researcher provided some demographic information of participants, qualifications, experience, and findings where necessary. Essential quotations are included as evidence, explanation, representation of the participants' views, or illustrations. These direct quotations serve to further validate the research and bring the reader into the situation presented. However, since this is a qualitative study, findings are presented in descriptive narrative style using thematic analysis for proper explanation and understanding. The objective of this descriptive narrative is to provide and

understanding of how people establish the stories of their experiences and how they reflect their individual experiences. Participants in this study included twenty former and current higher education administrators, policy makers and regulators. The education levels of these participants varied, with seventeen of the twenty having terminal degrees in different disciplines and the three with master's degrees. Of the number of participants in the selected categories, two were females and eighteen males. Participants were employed with the four public universities under study in Liberia and Sierra Leone, namely University of Liberia, William V.S. Tubman University, University of Sierra Leone, and Njala University. Most of these participants had 10 to 20 years of tenure with their various institutions. While others had served in similar positions in other institutions before appointments to their current positions. The participants noted that they had served in various capacities in their organizations which included presidents, vice chancellors, vice presidents, deputy vice chancellors, deans of colleges, senior lecturers, registrars, ministers of education, ministers of higher and technical education, commissioners of National Commissions on Higher Education and Tertiary Education Commissions.

Research question one sought to find the challenges in administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone in post conflict societies. In this section, the researcher explained what participants considered serious challenges and their understanding of how conflicts shaped these challenges. From participants' responses sixty distinct categories emerged. These were refined into twenty themes based on the frequency, relationships and sufficiency of data to back them. The themes are defined as abstract units which give meanings and identities to experiences and reduce qualitative data into small reporting units to simplify results reporting (Morgan & Nica, 2020). The themes showed recurrent patterns in the data which assisted in interpreting experiences.

Thematic analysis, based on the transcription of the semi-structured interviews conducted, was utilized to generate the categories or codes which were narrowed to themes. Themes generated from the codes which were revised several times, and organized into salient groups, topics and patterns which showed how the research questions were responded to by the data. This process involved labeling the data and breaking it down into easily explained themes. The findings are organized based on patterns and relationships of the data which derived from responses to the interview questions and their relations to the research questions.

The first theme dealt with specific challenges experienced by higher education administrators in public higher education institutions in post-conflict societies of Liberia and Sierra Leone. The second theme dealt with coping strategies which included administrative styles while the third theme dealt with mitigating strategies. The fourth theme looked at solutions used to handle administrative challenges while the fifth and sixth dealt with recommendations. Though several other themes occurred, the researcher deemed it necessary to capture dominant themes strategic to the study because they related to the research questions. For purposes of anonymity, participants were not identified in the presentation of the findings by their names, positions or institutions.

Challenges in the Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions

This section addresses unique challenges in the administration of public higher education institutions in post-conflict societies and challenges exacerbated by these conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Participants' responses on the specific challenges in the Administration of Public Higher Education in post- conflict societies were organized in systematic order. Participants noted several challenges peculiar to administering public higher education institutions in post-war circumstances.

War-Related Infrastructural Damage in Post-War Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Infrastructures of Public Higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone were severely damaged during the civil wars in these countries, making it not only difficult to restart these institutions but undermining instructional quality and administrative efficiency. Participant PG commented,

> In Sierra Leone, Njala University was destroyed so we had to start the University from scratch. The facilities are not adequate because we have a young population who are aspiring to seek higher education. There are competing government priorities, so we are unable to provide adequate infrastructures and facilities compared to the West. In west Africa, Liberia and Sierra Leone are 20 years behind in terms of the requisite materials needed to stock our libraries.

The strategic locations of some of the higher education institutions under study made them direct targets located for attacks or defense. For example, the University of Liberia is located few yards from the Executive Mansion, the home of the President who was being ousted. The University of Sierra Leone is situated on the highest peak overlooking the City of Freetown and key government installations.

Participant PL stressed the problems these institutions had were where they were situated during the war.

> At the University of Sierra Leone's Fourah Bay College, several buildings were destroyed, the faculty of engineering building, which is in direct line of sight from the State House was used as a launching ground for rebels and was unusable for a long time after the war. This impacted on our ability to run labs and programs.

Experiences at public universities in Liberia were not different. Infrastructures at the University of Liberia and Tubman University were destroyed. Bullet-ridden buildings were used for classrooms while students stood in corridors for lectures due to the lack of chairs. Laboratory facilities were looted and students in the sciences had to contend with alternative means to conduct

experiments. Burson burners were replaced with charcoal pots without heat regulators and other essential equipment, and laboratory supplies non-existent. Participants noted that poor infrastructure was also related to the amount of fundings public higher institutions of learning received after the wars. Though pre-war infrastructure was damaged, renovating it and building additional facilities to meet the rising student population was contingent on the amount of money allotted to higher education institutions. Liberia and Sierra Leone went through common experiences. Participant PP stated that,

> In Sierra Leone we have remnants of war; Njala University for example was destroyed so they had to start from scratch. Another reason is that Sierra Leone have very young population who are aspiring to seek higher education, but noting that our countries are financially constrained, there are competing priorities that government must address. Everybody knows we are unable to provide the adequate infrastructure and other facilities required for modern higher education compared to the West. Higher education is extremely expensive.

Higher education is not only expensive for parents and self-supporting students. The tuition is the cheapest on record. At the University of Liberia, pre-war tuition was seventy-five united states dollars a semester with the government subsidizing 50 per cent. By 2020, tuition is free with admission and other fees per semester totaling fifteen United States dollars. In Sierra Leone, the tuition fee at the University of Sierra Leone is equivalent to less than ten dollars, with the Government underwriting most of the cost.

Financing of Public Higher Education Institutions in Post -Post-Conflict Societies

Participants in this study, administrators, policy makers, and regulators, noted that a lack of adequate funding to higher education institutions, during and after the conflict, seriously impaired

the abilities of the institutions to function efficiently and effectively. For example, Participant PA

noted that:

> The University of Liberia had the lowest tuition fee in West Africa
> at five dollars per credit, yet students could not pay because they
> suffer from multi-dimensional poverty, living in slums, poor health
> conditions, and coming from a war condition and highly traumatized.

Participant PF commented that "funding higher education is problematic. The fiscal space is small

and there are other competing priorities, so the international community provided funding for basic

and secondary education".

With limited funding to operate public higher education institutions, there are other

competing priorities like research, community service, expanding programs and student enrolment.

This means public higher education institutions are constantly grappling with financial issues both

in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

As participant PC asserted, "The increase in the number of students keeps us struggling to

provide more classrooms, renovate, construct, and improve facilities with the limited funds we

have. We had to look elsewhere to build the current facilities we now have."   The necessity to

provide adequate facilities competed with the scarce financial resources needed to renovate or

reconstruct. Participant PC noted,

> Resource is not only scarce, but at the University of Liberia, it is not
> there. If you do not invest in education, you are starting to fail.
> Education is not cheap, especially in terms of facilities." Participant
> PM agreed, the student population has expanded but there is a
> mismatch between student population and facilities and
> infrastructure so lecturers are struggling, scheduling must be
> carefully crafted, especially for large classes, and that can create
> tension.

Provision of funds for higher education is sometimes not only tied to revenue generating capacities of the country but also to international financial institutions which set parameters for the funds they provide. As participant PT indicated,

> Funding for tertiary education has always been weak, the reason for this is international funding agencies are principally prepared to keep us exposed to understanding them but not to compete with them, so the funding has generally been lowered down to make you a functional worker but not necessarily independent.

However, participant PE noted that "administrators do not complain because the government funds salaries 100% but the major challenge is providing operational funds". The researcher also found out that during the periods of conflict when governments were barely functional, International Non-Governmental Organizations, INGOs, assumed responsibilities for education and concentrated on basic and secondary education. These interventions impacted tertiary education whose structures were weak and ill- equipped to handle the flow of students into these institutions. For example, one participant mentioned that "the total amount set aside for the education sector, including basic, primary, secondary and universities in Liberia is barely 15%, so you can imagine what goes to the universities".

Government Support and External Influence

In both Liberia and Sierra Leone, the governments assumed responsibility to provide funding for the public higher education institutions before and after the war. These subventions were not adequate to meet the demands of the universities before civil wars in these countries. Most participants agreed that the government's funding of these institutions is important, but they suggested, however, that funds should be set aside to fund tertiary institutions. Participant PM. argued, "if you look at Ghana, there is always a project going on under the Ghana Education Trust

Fund, GETFund, and those kinds of interventions take a lot off the shoulders of government in terms of funding higher education."

Another participant PM commented that" there is a lot of government influence in the decisions we make managing the university. There are lots of interferences because the universities are not autonomous. The Head of State can remove the head of the university at any time." Since the University of Liberia reopened after the civil war in 2009, it has had eight presidents including one acting. This amounts to an average of two and a half years' service for each. This is low comparatively since the average tenure of a vice chancellor in West African Universities is five years. This fast turnover of Presidents of the University of Liberia makes it difficult for any president to attain the vision, mission of the University and development objectives.

Participant PB noted that,

> One of the perennial problems we have is the politization of the University. Policy makers believe they must have their hands holistically in how universities are governed. Higher education should be depoliticized so the experts and leaders can formulate and implement policies to help transform higher education system in Liberia instead of allowing politicians to have dominant control over what should be legislated.

The case in Sierra Leone is similar, though steps are being taken to transform it. As participant PQ stated,

> Since the inception of public universities, the President of the country is the chancellor of the university, and being chancellor, he is head of all public universities. They do interfere knowingly or unknowingly. If someone breaks the law and you act, you may receive a call from top politicians.

Another participant PJ agreed that "the government has direct control over higher institutions of learning. These institutions rely on the government for salaries and the operation of the university. So, we must comply when they talk."

This situation is changing, at least in Sierra Leone where the President Maada Bio said openly during a campaign rally, he does not want to be Chancellor and would have someone outside the political framework serve as Chancellor. Participant PK observed that,

> It will not stop political interference. In our various universities, we have political players with vested interests on all of the boards. Their presence on these boards is marked by political decisions. It has educational benefits but is political. Our people are not willing to relinquish such power.

Participant PE concurs in this statement: "People who do not know how educational institutions work, want to interfere with the governance of these institutions." In the case of the University of Liberia, the faculty and staff associations set up to promote the welfare of their members use threats of boycotting classes and demanding more space in the administration of the University. These demands are followed by persistent threats of strikes, closures of the University and faculty promotion outside of established policies of progression and tenure. In 2021, the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Julius Maada Bio relinquished his position as Chancellor of all public Universities and devolved that position to private citizens or business people. For the first time a Private citizen, Dr. James Sanfra Koroma, Economist, Businessman, with renown careers in business, banking and finance takes over the chancellorship of the University of Sierra Leone. This change is consistent with the new University Act of 2021, which saw the former Chancellor, the Sierra Leonean President Julius Maada Bio, historically fulfilling a promise made during elections campaign of 2018 to de- politicize and render Public Universities in Sierra Leone autonomous (University of Sierra Leone, 2021). The President of Sierra Leone served as Chancellor under the University of Sierra Leone Act of 2005 until the new universities Act of 2021 abolished his provision. As a result, the new Universities Act of 2021 represents a

turning point for Sierra Leone's educational system and provides an opportunity to depoliticize decision making at public higher education institutions since these chancellors of Public universities have powers to appoint vice chancellors and university courts or boards (Njala University, 2022).

The Njala University which was without a substantive Vice Chancellor for a few years, saw the appointment of Professor Bashiru Koroma, former Deputy Vice Chancellor and Chairman of the University's Internal Scoring Board as Vice Chancellor and Moses Geveo as Chancellor in June 2022, The Chancellor of Njala University is a medical doctor, university administrator and academic. This deviation to non -political actors serving as chancellors of public universities could also shift total reliance on the government's subvention to the private sector. However, these chancellors are appointed by the President of Sierra Leone and could be subjected to political influence in the management of public higher education institutions. It is early to weigh up the changes occasioned by these new appointments, which are subjects for further research. Contrarily, the President of Liberia serves as Visitor or Chancellor of all public universities in Liberia. In keeping with the charters of these institutions, the President of Liberia nominates potential presidents of higher education institutions to their respective boards of trustees for subsequent appointments after vetting a concise list of three possible appointees submitted by a search committee. Interestingly, the search committee to find qualified candidates is itself appointed by the President of Liberia.

Academic Qualifications of Faculty in Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Several Participants related to the problems of poorly trained staff and the effect on the quality of tertiary education. A cardinal factor in the poor qualifications of staff is the brain drain, leaving behind overaged faculty members to administer the institutions. Most of these older faculty

have reached retirement age but are constrained to continue working because of insufficient qualified staff to replace them. Most of these older faculty members have not benefited from refresher or retooling courses since the civil wars. Using new teaching and learning methods, especially those involving technology, is problematic for these faculty.

African higher education systems have been described as poor. Employers complained about the poor employability of students graduating from universities as functional illiterates, due to the inferior quality of education. As Liberia's former President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf remarked during the 93rd convocation exercises of the University of Liberia, "We need to improve the educational quality and output to make it meaningful to our existence…and not lose sight of the importance of quality education which every aspect of our planning and vision revolves" (Sirleaf, 2012). According to the Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2013) many countries that have achieved progress in access to higher education have not been able to make corresponding achievements in quality education delivery. The scenario worsens when it involves public higher education institutions in post-conflict societies like Liberia and Sierra Leone. Increasing access to higher education without improving the quality of education is detrimental to societal growth and development. Educational extension must be commensurate with the provision of suitably qualified staff and facilities. Suitably qualified staff are not adequately schooled in the current tenets of discipline and competent in content delivery. One participant, PP observed:

> One of our biggest challenges is the aging faculty, especially in a post-conflict situation we find ourselves. We do not have many youthful faculty and that is a concern. Our experienced folks are aging. I did a recent study looking at STEM courses: science, engineering, mathematics, and technology; what we found was that across major universities, especially in technical vocational education and agriculture; is an enormous number of aging faculty. Not only that, but the faculty is also skewed towards male, with limited females in the STEM courses. If we do not address it, we

> will become less competitive in innovation that drives industry, agriculture, and health systems.

Another component associated with faculty qualification is the low level of preparedness to instruct tertiary education courses. Post-conflict public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone had to juggle with using the available instructional staff and keeping the institutions operational. Several available faculties lacked the qualification to offer instructions at the tertiary level. 60% of the participants concurred that instructional staff had poor qualifications to deliver quality higher education. According to one Participant, "the current faculty in our higher education sector are not adequately trained for what is expected of academics". Reference is made to teaching and learning methods, quality assurance and delivery. Other shortcomings include the ability to adapt to modern teaching methods and new technology.

Many participants expressed similar sentiments. The ensuing comments categorized their experiences during post- war administration of higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. A key component of faculty ill-preparedness to teach is that most graduate and post graduate degrees equip people with content knowledge but do not prepare them as teachers except where the training is in teachers' education. Most of these faculty members lack pedagogical skills and teaching and learning are challenged. At the University of Sierra Leone, each employed faculty is compelled to take pedagogical courses to enhance content delivery and students' learning capabilities. At the University of Liberia, while faculty development has improved, the emphasis is on improving the faculty qualification and profile and not content delivery for learning outcomes. Statistics from the University of Liberia, as of 2022, showed a total of 104 junior faculty members are pursuing graduate and post graduate degrees in various countries in Africa, Asia, the United States and Europe (University of Liberia Annual Report, 2022). A Teaching and Learning Center,

established at the University of Liberia in 2019, emphasizes digital training and computer literacy

for blended and online courses which most faculty members lack. A participant PR asserted,

> There are challenges, and we must improve the quality of our faculty.
> We conducted an audit and found out that many of our faculty are
> master's degree holders or college students, especially at Fourah
> Bay and IPAM. We decided that they must improve themselves
> within timelines or we will stop them from being full-time lecturers
> and reduce their standing to part-timers. Fortunately, the Ministry of
> Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) is providing additional
> scholarships for lecturers in higher education so that they can
> improve themselves.

The University of Sierra Leone signed a memorandum of understanding with the

University of Liberia. The memorandum which is the first of its kind between these historic

universities will facilitate faculty and staff development, research, grant application, curricula

harmonization, cultural exchanges, lectureships and exchanges. The MOU has been implemented

in areas of quality education, faculty and staff exchange, quality assurance, and capacity building.

Similar MOUs were signed with the Njala University and Ernest Bai Koroma University.

The level of educational achievement determines placement in the academic structure of

the Universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone. In both instances, research and publication in

professional peer reviewed journals are added advantages. For example, institutions in Sierra

Leone comply to the British educational system where positioning is contingent on gradation by

qualification, and peer reviewed academic publications. Immediately after the civil wars in Liberia

and Sierra Leone, persons with first degrees could become a member of the instructional staff at

public higher education institutions due to the exodus of faculty members and gaps created during

the civil wars. According to Participant PO

> The minimum requirement in Sierra Leone for a lecturer is master's
> degree in all disciplines. Vice Chancellors are to be of professorial
> rank, with enough papers published in professional journals.

Meanwhile there are higher education instructors who served as teaching assistants or lecturers.

Participant PG noted that,

> With a first degree, one can be taken as a research and teaching assistant which puts a person on a career path, but you can only be appointed as research and teaching assistant if you are already registered for a master's program. One strategy employed was to withhold immunities until a research or teaching assistant is registered for a post graduate program with time limits to complete or risk terminations of your contract.

The situation with faculty qualification has been very challenging because most faculty members rely on scholarships which are not readily available. Several participants mentioned that faculty members, without training, must teach courses they are not academically qualified to teach because of faculty shortage, low salaries, and wages. This has caused many members of the faculty to seek employment in other universities or colleges while retaining their jobs at higher public institutions of learning. Most participants agreed that moonlighting or working in two or more higher education institutions simultaneously limits efficiency and the amount of time provided for the students.

Participant PH stated:

> Because of the shortage of faculty or instructional staff, we also found out that most of the faculty are moonlighting: one man teaching at two- three universities or colleges. At normal times, a faculty has a particular time to teach and a time to be in his office so students will come and meet him, but it is no longer like that in most of our colleges and universities, everybody is moonlighting because we do not have qualified teachers in large numbers that colleges and universities can tap on. That is the kind of situation we have now in the higher education setting in Liberia.

Some public universities and colleges are making efforts to train faculty and staff to meet the demands of the institutions. At the University of Sierra Leone, faculty academic qualification is linked to senior lecturers who must possess a doctoral degree at the entry level. Public higher

education institutions in Liberia are relying on bilateral and institutional scholarship arrangements to address the problem. Statistics from the University of Liberia shows 102 faculty and staff members are currently benefiting from training programs outside Liberia. The majority of these are beneficiaries from the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) project. Under Ruforum, African Universities award competitive post-graduate tuition free scholarships for faculty development in science, technology, engineering, agriculture, and mathematics, (Steam) Ruforum, (2022). Other faculties are beneficiaries under the World Bank sponsored program, Improving Results in Secondary Education, IRISE, to train faculty in Education at the graduate level. Under this project the World Bank allocated a grant of 47 million United States dollars to increase accessibility to and completion of senior secondary education, especially for adolescent girls and upgrade the quality of the teaching workforce at the Ministry of Education and the University of Liberia (World bank, 2019). The University of Liberia benefits from this program to train graduate level teachers from the College of Education in multiple disciplines. The University of Liberia's Institutional Development and Planning faculty and staff development program also supports graduate and post- graduate education for faculty and staff in the United States, Africa and Asia. (University of Liberia Institutional Development & Planning Annual Report, 2020). These interventions do not fully alleviate the problems of moonlighting which reduces the quality of output, since energies required for teaching one institution is divided between two or three institutions.

Digitization of Academic Processes and Courses at Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Digital education helps improve educational quality and access in higher education. In post- conflict societies digital migration was delayed due to inadequate funding, computer literacy and outdated facilities. Public higher education systems in Liberia and Sierra Leone were slowly

addressing challenges of digitization when poor infrastructures, high student enrollment and the pandemics of Ebola and corona viruses forced them to utilize digital technology as alternatives to direct in person instruction. These pandemics forced administrators to choose between closing down higher learning institutions or experimenting with online learning for instruction. The decision to digitize instruction posed challenges for both faculty and students who were not prepared for the sudden change. Digitalization of higher education presented a radical transformative effect on education delivery and learning in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It also transformed registration and record keeping processes at these institutions. Registration and admissions systems were constantly clogged at the university of Liberia with students experiencing frustration and unnecessary processing delays because these processes were managed manually. In 2019, the Government of Liberia digitized the registration process allowing students to register from anywhere thus minimizing problems associated with registration inclusive of delayed registration and fraud. One participant PB noted "Now we do have a stringent registration. If a student does not register in thirty days, we close everything."

Public higher education institutions in Sierra Leone and Liberia are not fully digitized. Hybrid education, brought about by the Covid 19 pandemic, provides online classes for students. Participants from all the institutions under study agree technological migration is problematic. Problems with internet access, connectivity and computer literacy exist. Faculty and students had to adjust to distance teaching and learning. In Sierra Leone, all campuses of institutions under study are Wi-Fi and free of charge to students while in Liberia internet data packages are available only to faculty teaching online courses. Students must provide their own data to access lessons conducted online though some computer labs on the University of Liberia campuses are Wi-Fi and accessible to students. This necessitates the acceleration of internet technology to catch up with

other higher education institutions in West Africa. In most instances, data required for faculty to teach online courses are provided by the University of Liberia.

Participant PB expressed the view that digitization could alleviate problems of poor infrastructure and exponential student population.

> We are thinking about going digital to deal with the exponential rise of student enrollment while we continue to build infrastructures on a limited land space. Digitization will help us to deal with natural occurrences like Ebola and Corona Virus which halted academic activities around the world.

Quality Assurance and Academic standards in Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Quality assurance in any higher institution of learning is to guarantee the quality of standards set for the management of administrators, staff, students, and programs. This includes monitoring of new programs, policies, and awards. Matei and Iwinska (2016) explain quality in higher education is not clearly defined. But five key indicators for determining quality are listed as highest academic standards of excellence, elimination of defects, fulfillment of institutional mission and goals, achievement of high output of efficiency and attainment of quality in transforming students and the organization (Matei & Iwinska, 2016). Using these standards as a basis, higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone have lots to accomplished. Quality assurance units are nonexistent in Liberian public higher education institutions including the universities of Liberia and William V.S. Tubman, institutions under this study. According to some participants, quality assurance is one of the weakest links in quality education delivery, which needs to be assured for the future. At the University of Liberia admission examination results had to be curved because the scores were too low. Participant PE indicated.

> We used standard means and deviation based on the number of students who took the university entrance exams. The acceptable scores for entrance into the University were 60% for math and 70% for English. Most of the students had to do remediation.

A low admission grade demonstrates poor preparedness of some students to undertake university-level work and places additional burdens on faculty. The absence of a system to assess the caliber of instruction or learning outcomes exacerbates this problem. In Sierra Leone, the University of Sierra Leone and Njala University have existing quality assurance units. In Liberia, attempts are being made to establish functional quality assurance units across universities. One participant PS remarked,

> Quality should be at the heart education in Sierra Leone, and we want to do just that. We have realized that the standards were going southward because of the remnants we have had from the war where we had a massive brain drain. So, to halt this, we have now made it a policy, which is currently being operationalized in our institutions, that all our institutions should have quality assurance units. To do this, we are bringing in staff with the requisite qualifications.

Quality Assurance Units in higher institutions of learning enable the institutions to safeguard and adopt holistic methods to support quality in higher education management, instructional output, and training. Quality generally means fitness for purpose so quality assurance in higher education context is establishing the mechanism to ensure and maintain quality education (Khan, 2022). Quality assurance in African universities is considered a novelty which involves several issues such as standards in systems, national expectations, relevance of curriculum, teaching and learning qualities, ability to compete nationally and internationally and adequate infrastructure. This raises questions about the purpose of higher education and whether the education offered fits the purpose. As indicated by Khan (2022), higher education in the African perspective is to provide training to contribute to the socio-economic development of the society by improving the quality of life of the individual and the services he is competent to provide. The purposes change depending on the situation or circumstances. In the case of post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone, one might argue the purpose of higher education is to help national recovery,

reconstruction, peace, stability and development. This is a significant fact taking into consideration the total collapse of national governance structures which require reconstruction. Consequently, quality assurance allows for responding to society's needs by making education meaningful and useful through planning delivery and evaluation systems (Khan, 2022). This implies aligning academic courses with student needs and the job market.

The Tertiary Education Act of 2001 in Sierra Leone established a Tertiary Education Commission to regulate tertiary education and ensure quality assurance in all higher education institutions (TEC Act, 2001). In 2009, the University of Sierra Leone established a quality Assurance Directorate to promote high academic standards, improvements student and staff access to information, teaching and assessments, publishing of examination results and overall administrative processes. (USL, 2022).

The University of Liberia is in the process of setting up a quality assurance unit assisted by the University of Sierra Leone based on a memorandum of understanding signed between these institutions in September 2021. The Memorandum of Understanding provides for collaboration in faculty, staff, and student exchange, research collaboration, and institutional development. According to the University of Liberia (2021), the agreement will also facilitate grant application, curricula harmonization; visiting lectureships and seminars; cultural and student exchanges, joint research publications, and study visits. Under this landmark agreement, the University of Sierra Leone is assisting the University of Liberia to establish a quality assurance unit. According to participant, PL, "because of poor quality assurance policies, students acquire degrees without knowledge. There is no mechanism to ensure quality". The quality output of public higher institutions of learning is measured by the number of students employed and their ability to function efficiently in the work environment.

Faculty and student unrest in Public Higher Education Institutions

Since the war years student faculty unrest has been a factor in higher education delivery. Incessant faculty and student unrest led to repeated closures of academic institutions for unspecified periods, destruction of facilities and personal properties, and threats to national security. Actions of unrest are blamed on poor student facilities and services, faculty promotion issues, poor communications, salary increments, student politics, and leadership crises. Participants in this study agreed that the period between 1990 and 2010 was the most difficult for administrators in public higher education in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The rationale was that many administrators, faculty, and students had not fully recovered from the war. According to participants in this study, many faculty members and students felt they were authorities unto themselves and did not need to take instruction from anybody. As one participant remarked, "This kind of imposition of rights in the education setting created problems for anybody who administered the affairs of the university at that time."

Unfortunately, these strike actions or unrests continue from the wars until 2024 for several reasons including poor student services, student politics and leadership rivalry, increment in faculty salaries, and faculty involvement in the administration of higher institutions of learning. Half of the participants agreed that the civil conflicts influenced the behavior of students and faculty. "The troubles are unique as the circumstances that obtained. We were not running a normal school, rather one that the students would threaten the administration, and the faculty would help exacerbate it by having serious commotion regarding compensation" (Participant PO). Other participants believed the war had little or no effect on the problems of students and faculty unrest suggesting current students did not experience wars and were not affected by it. Participant PT asserted.

> Problems of poor communication, access to decision makers, faculty disgruntlement, and external political influences engender strike actions and violent behaviors. Findings from this study revealed low faculty salaries, delayed payments, poor communications led to faculty strike actions which were buttressed by student empathy. One participant believed availability of adequate finance is a key component to keep public higher institutions of learning calm.

In 2022, Faculty at the University of Liberia instituted a strike action in demand for the harmonization of their salaries to remove disparities and to equalize same based on qualification and experience. A scrutiny of the University's payroll by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning discovered 75 members of the faculty fully employed in other government agencies in contravention of the Government's policy against double dipping (University of Liberia, 2021). The Government of Liberia's code of conduct forbids an employee from receiving salaries for full-time employment from two government institutions. According to the Liberian Government Code of Conduct for Employees of the three branches of Government, 2011 section 9.10 states, Receipt of Double Emoluments Public Officials and Employees of Government shall not, while receiving or being paid salaries by the Government, at the same time receive or be paid a salary by any other public office unless it is established that such additional employment is in the public interest [e.g. teaching at public educational institutions], and that such service does not conflict with the Public Official or Employee of Government's principal employment.(An Act Of Legislature Prescribing A National Code Of Conduct For All Public Officials And Employees Of The Government Of The Republic Of Liberia, 2014).

The harmonization of salaries of faculty of state-run higher education institutions equating them to civil servants also led to strike actions by the faculty of the William V. S. Tubman University in 2021, who stopped all lectures until demands for salary increments were met. The faculty of Tubman University demanded an explanation of the matrix used for salary harmonization and

charged the University's president with misappropriating the University's funds (Pelenah, 2021). This strike action led to the resignation of the President of William V. S. Tubman University in 2021. Salary harmonization also poses continuous problems for educational governance at the University of Liberia. Faculty and staff are constantly demanding increments and opportunities to scrutinize payrolls and employee listings.

High Student Enrollment in Post-War Public Higher Education Institutions

The increasing enrollment in public higher institutions of learning results in poor quality of education. Since the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, public higher institutions of learning have experienced a greater number of students desirous to acquire higher education than the institutions' capacity to cater for. The high student enrollment with limited faculty, funds and facilities increases the inability of institutions to provide quality education. Higher education enrollment rates in the world have doubled in the last twenty years from 19%b to 38% between 2000 and 2018 (UNESCO, 2020). Though Sub-Saharan Africa has registered a low enrollment rate comparatively, current enrollment figures show an increase of 125% for the same period (UNESCO, 2020). However, the increase in growth rate is not commensurate with the availability of operational funds and demand for access. According to UNESCO (2020) Sub-Saharan Africa is far behind other countries in higher education enrollment. Despite low enrollment in higher education in West Africa, the student growth in public higher institutions of learning exceeds enrollment in preceding years, with no exception to Liberia and Sierra Leone. Primary barriers of poverty and access to higher institutions of learning in Liberia and Sierra Leone have been removed by governments' subventions to public higher institutions of learning, free tuitions, and scholarship programs without alleviating the problems of adequate funding. According to participant PO.

> The University population increased, and enrolment was higher than the capacity to plan and finance higher education. We had an enrolment of 15,000 to 18,000 students. The faculty student ratio at that time was 1 to 45 on average while the mode was 1 to 75. We have a very young population in Sierra Leone, and when this government came into being in 2018, it declared free quality education from primary level to senior secondary level where you take your exam to give you the criteria for entry into university. So, that decision saw an exponential rise in the number of students who went to school and could possibly enroll in universities.

The high enrolment is also linked to population growth rates in Liberia and Sierra Leone projected at 3.41 million with the average birth rate of 456 daily in Liberia and population growth rate of 2.7%, the 16th highest in the world in Sierra Leone (World Population Review, 2022). In 2021, the population of Sierra Leone was projected at 8.14 million, an increase of 2.06% compared with 7.98 million in 2020. Sierra Leone has a population growth rate of 4.8%. or 710 births daily with a world ranking of 79 (World bank, 2022).

Student enrollment at the University of Liberia increased from 20,000 in 2018/2019 to 21, 048 in 2020/2021. By 2022, that figure increased to 22,000 students. Recent statistics from the University of Liberia indicate that 8,900 undergraduate students passed the admission examinations and are likely to be admitted for the academic semester 2023/2024. (University of Liberia Admission Examination Results, 2023). This increment in student enrollment is not matched by infrastructural development, the government's subvention to the institution, student services and faculty development or an increase in academic programs. Many of the participants in the study indicated that high student enrollment is influenced by population growth rate and other factors. Participant, PG indicated,

> When this institution was built, the population of Sierra Leone was less than five million but now we have close to eight million with most of them young people. In this university formerly, we did not have more than six thousand students but now we have close to

twenty thousand, and we really do not have the facilities to comfortably accommodate everyone.

The Liberian situation is similar with the current enrollment at the University of Liberia

totaling 22,000 students as of 2022. Enrolment at the university of Sierra Leone

Participant PC asserts

> The new shift is a reduction in the students entering the Business College in favor of the sciences and other related technical fields. In the recent placement examinations, of the 4716 candidates who passed, 49.53 % were females and 50.07% males. 2098 or 44.07% registered for sciences while 1966 or 35.49% registered for the Business College. This means the enrollment of the University of Liberia for academic 2022/2023 will increase to about 28,000 students. High student enrollment affects learning outcomes and stagnates quality development in public higher education institutions in post-conflict countries.

High student enrollment, occasioned by population increase, the number of

students completing high school, educational policies and programs which support

higher education and slow pace of development affect the quality of higher

education institutions. Participant PM summarized the challenges experienced by

these institutions due to high student enrollment.

> The population has expanded in universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone, but there is a mismatch between the student population and the facilities in terms of infrastructure; so, you find out that lecturers are struggling. Time tabling must be carefully crafted especially for large classes, and that can sometimes create tension. But facilities and classrooms are a constant challenge.

For example, at the Institute of Public Administration and Management, (IPAM), in Sierra

Leone, funding was approved for a massive building at the secretariat, yet classrooms are still a

challenge, so administrators usually go out of their campus to rent space especially during the

times of examination. Authorities will have to find innovative ways of addressing the challenge of

infrastructure to match the rising population of students. Another participant PF mentioned further problems of over crowdedness.

> Sometimes you find students standing up in classrooms with no seating capacity; some of them had to stand at the windows as the instructor is teaching. The classes were so overcrowded that they could not contain all the students registered for the course because the facilities were inadequate, most especially, at the University of Liberia where we have been teaching for some years.

Political influence in the Management of Public Higher Education Administration

As indicated, most of the participants cited political interference as a major factor affecting the administration of public higher education institutions. During periods of war, law and order broke down, affecting all facets of society, including higher education. Since institutions do not operate in chaos, public higher education institutions were forced to close, with campuses abandoned or use for various purposes including barracks, displaced and relief shelters. In some instances, university campuses were direct targets of war. From participants' responses and visits to these institutions under study, all four institutions demonstrated signs of destruction and degradation. Many participants shared the view that once these institutions were reopened, direct interference from government in their operations affected efficient management. A common opinion was that University leaders were not given the autonomy to run the institutions. As one participant put it, "The biggest challenge is too much external influence. People who do not understand how educational institutions work, tend to interfere with the governance of the institutions."

The politics in Liberia and Sierra Leone are determined by the political leadership which shape the socio-economic structures. The structures of public higher institutions of learning are objects of direct political and external interference. In both countries, the President of the country

is automatically either the Visitor or Chancellor to all public higher institutions of learning. This allows them the leverage to make final appointments of institutional heads of these institutions and their governing boards, which in all instances, include public officials. As one participant put it, "If a university President has connections with the power that be a lot of issues can be handled. In the absence of that, where the relationship is based on professionalism, that University President will have serious administrative challenges."

This is supported by another participant, PD who asserted, "the government is interfering with our academic processes of appointments and promotions, because they pay our salaries and when you want to promote a certain number of staff and they say funds are not available, you have to wait".

Similarly, from the findings, participants drew examples of the interconnection between political party affiliation, student sponsorship and direct financing to the institutions which depend on government's subvention for operations. Responses from participants indicated that governments set policy directions through either the Ministries of Education and National Commissions on Higher Education in Liberia and in Sierra Leone, the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education and National Commissions on Higher Education or the Tertiary Education Commission. These agencies regulate all higher education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The findings revealed that these agencies were virtually non-functional during the periods of conflict. In the case of Liberia, the University of Liberia set standards for other tertiary education until a consultant was hired to revitalize the National Commission on Higher Education. Though attempts were made to operate public higher education institutions, regulatory bodies were nonfunctional. Policy makers in Sierra Leone, stressed that there is a lack of proper coordination between the board, tertiary Education Commission and the institutions with institutions wanting

to do things on their own claiming autonomy and academic freedom. These regulatory bodies are responsible for setting policy guidelines and standards and regulating the operations of tertiary institutions while institutions are the implementing bodies. Participants in this study suggested regulatory institutions need to be strengthened and higher education depoliticized.

Free Education Policies in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Free education policy is being experimented with in Liberia and Sierra Leone at various levels. In 2018, the Liberian government announced a tuition free policy for its two public universities and seven community colleges (University World news, 2018). The Free Education policy in Liberia is to provide access to higher education for Liberian youths. The assumption is that the number of students qualified to enter tertiary education are not admitted because of their inability to pay the required tuition fees. Ironically, statistics from the University of Liberia indicate over 41.78% of students admitted are from private and faith based secondary schools where tuition fees exceed those at the University of Liberia (University of Liberia, 2023). There are no clear guidelines on implementation of a free education policy though the Liberian government pays tuition fees to the public higher education institutions based on the number of registered students in any given semester. Subvention payments are not based on the actual cost of educating one student per year but is estimated at 14 United States dollars per student leaving a gap of 56 dollars per student with a full course load of fifteen credit hours. Fees at the University of Liberia before the 2019 presidential announcement of free tertiary stood at four United States dollars per credit hour, one of the lowest worldwide. For a full load of fifteen credit hours students paid a meager tuition fee of sixty United States dollars for one academic semester. With the free tuition policy students pay the equivalent of less than forty Unity States dollars in fees per semester.

In Sierra Leone, the Government free education policy launched in 2018 is limited to primary and secondary schools while subsidies to Public Higher Education Institutions were scrapped and replaced with student loans arranged with commercial banks (Okello, 2018). There are virtually no studies done on the impact of these policies on PHEIs which provides avenues for further research. I believe this has exacerbated problems of managing public higher education institutions instead of reducing them but could have positive influences on educational equity for students in primary and secondary schools. One participant PS explained,

> This year's primary exams, the top scorers were from the rural areas. I feel good that the {Sierra Leonean} government's intervention is creating equity in the quality of output. Free education is giving major opportunities to those who cannot afford it (Education).

However, participant PB had a different opinion on the effect of the free education policy and stated,

> Free Tuition across the entire public universities and colleges is worrisome. The concept is good, but there is nowhere where education is free; you can give it on a performance basis. A student cannot get a two-point zero cumulative grade point average and have free tuition. We are graduating young people that have less than two-point five grade point average because they do not see it as important to work hard and be rewarded. We are producing people who may not be able to create jobs, not be employed, or be able to go to graduate school because of the complacency created by free tuition.

Free education affects more than the ability of students to get quality education. It has a direct bearing on operational costs, infrastructural development, provision of student services and efficient management. Though student enrollment in all the universities under study increased and new programs have been introduced, the amounts of funding allotted are in adequate to meet the growing operational costs. The free education policies would be effective if governments would pay direct education costs based on the actual costs to educate a pupil at any level. Projections on the number of pupils entering public universities from statistics of the West African Examination

Council in both countries would serve as an impetus to determine cost to Government. Participant PL commented,

> To implement a policy on free education, look at the University's budget and ensure it is fully supported by the Government to carry out what is required without tuition. Tuition fees helped various universities to carry out administrative functions and provide the services and equipment students need in their learning process.

In most instances the government payment to universities fell short of the amounts that could be collected by these institutions when institutions managed their own finances. At the University of Liberia, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning allocates fourteen United States dollars per student, a decrease of over forty United States dollars for tuition fees for each student per semester. This shortfall affects the institution's ability to improve facilities, upgrade faculty and staff and institute new programs. Student services are not adequate, giving rise to constant demands for improvement and possible strike actions.

However Participant PB argued that,

> Gaps created by free education can be filled by increasing the budget of public higher education institutions to the level of the deficit created by removal of tuition fees to make these institutions meet the demands of students and the learning process.

This depends primarily on revenue generation and the political will of governments to invest in higher education. The Free education policy in Liberia reduced institutions' operational funds and hindered their abilities to improve facilities and the learning environment. More importantly, it demotivates students to learn since students on academic probation and honored students are beneficiaries of the same free tuition policies. At the University of Liberia, the maximum number of years required to complete an undergraduate program is six years. Many students tend to exceed this requirement without penalties further increasing problems of access and over crowdedness.

Impact of Ebola and Covid- 19 on Public Higher Education Institutions

Public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone were on paths of recovery when both countries were hit with the deadly and highly contagious Ebola virus, 2014-2016 and Covid 19 in 2019. Ebola is an infectious fatal disease which presents fever and internal bleeding. It is spread through body fluids of an infected person (Center for Disease Control, 2020). The disease led to immediate closure of higher education institutions and remained for a period of nine months to one year. Liberia and Sierra Leone had weak IT and communication systems to deal with this public health emergency. Poor Internet facilities and power supplies made it difficult to teach courses online and thousands of students from primary to universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone had their education disrupted (Watt, 2020). In 2019, the world, including Liberia and Sierra Leone, was racked with the Corona 19 virus which also affected higher education. Ebola and corona viruses were similar in how they affected educational institutions. Learning from past experiences of Ebola, public higher education institutions in Liberia and   Sierra Leone responded by introducing online classes which had difficulties and benefits.

According to participant PT,

> During the Covid period, there was a hybrid where we took classes online and for some students it was a blessing because some of our students are workers, they would stay in their offices or at home and log in to their classes. However, it was difficult for those students who were technologically challenged and could not log in. Notwithstanding, they coped and are looking forward to more online classes.

Students were not the only ones grappling with technology problems, data affordability, and access to computers. The institutions under study had to provide computers, data, and training for distance education for faculty. Despite the difficulties with access to internet connectivity, data and computer literacy administrators used the covid period to introduce distance learning. Participant PC asserted,

> We could run an E-learning semester; our students were home. We didn't have to deal with the regular daily outpouring of student issues on campus, and transportation for students and faculty. but our faculty and students had difficulties adjusting to the whole e-learning system. Having a whole semester online was new, so people resisted change and use the issue of connectivity, which we do not have control over. All of these were challenging but students were happy that during this COVID-19 pandemic, we could run a whole semester complete and prepare for graduation.

Several participants agreed the Ebola and coronavirus pandemics influenced their decisions to create e-learning platforms which helped solve problems associated with limited infrastructures, over crowdedness, faculty shortages and high student enrolment.

The Impact of Traumatization on War Affected Students and Faculty

Everybody experiences some form of trauma in their lives daily. Stress can be harmful to a person's social, emotional, and physical health and have long-term effects on societies especially if it persists and builds up. Recognizing the origins, consequences, and promoting behaviors and laws that lead to wholesome societies require an understanding of the exacerbating and mitigating effects of trauma and difficult circumstances. A traumatic event is one that a person perceives as being very frightful, dangerous, or endangering to them or others (Atkinson, 2013 & NCTSN, 2017). Trauma is the emotional, psychological, and physical aftermath of extremely stressful situations such as those involving risk, violence, massive loss, or life- threatening situations, which trigger survival mechanisms that are not necessary in other situations. Educational systems and institutions are in a unique position to protect students from the damaging effects of trauma and/or adversity or worsen these problems if the educational institutions fail to recognize these difficulties or are not qualified or incapable of supporting these needy students thereby creating toxic learning environment (Osher et al., 2014).

In the case of Liberia and Sierra Leone, civil wars covered 13-year periods from 1990 to 2003. The Liberian war started in 1990 and ended in 2003 while the Sierra Leonean war commenced in 1991 and ended in 2002. After the wars in these respective countries, a major looming problem was what to do with ex-combatants, the majority of whom were of secondary school and college age. The overriding consensus was to disarm, demobilize and integrate young combatants. Disarmament is defined as the collection, control and disposal of arms while demobilization refers to the removal of combatants from an armed group, registering, counting and monitoring them for re-integration into society (Gislesen, 2006). Challenges inherent in the physical and psychological reintegration process involved family tracing and acceptance and the creation of opportunities for demobilized ex-combatants in a post -conflict society desperately in need of peace and reconciliation. The academic community has paid little attention to youths or child soldiers in post-conflict reconstruction and peace building in west Africa, particularly Liberia and Sierra Leone who were allegedly recruited by all fighting forces in these respectively conflicts (Gislesen, 2006). Child soldiers are considered any one below the age of 18 recruited to fight in armed conflict (Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement in Armed Conflict, (2001) & African Charter, 1981). Though studies detailing the numbers of ex-combatants who entered higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone are scanty, it is estimated that a total 15,000 youths served in the Sierra Leonean war and 21,000 in Liberia (Gislesen, 2006).

The civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone affected youths of college going age and adults in several forms. Some served as combatants, and other victims of physical and sexual abuse, exposure to violence and witnesses to deaths and destruction. Though institutions of learning remained closed during peak periods of the conflict, one of the first attempts to demonstrate

normalcy was the reopening of schools, colleges and Universities. The University of Liberia, which was closed in 1990, with its facilities as displaced centers, reopened in 1996. The Liberian and Sierra Leonean tertiary education systems had to deal with a residue of a generation, who had not received proper preparatory education, craving to enter higher education. Despite problems caused by high enrollment, most of the faculty, staff and students had been affected by the wars. The effects of the trauma experienced by educators and students include post-traumatic stress disorders, transgenerational stress disorders, anxiety, depression, impaired memory, and difficulty concentrating (NCTSN, 2017).

The traumatic experiences of faculty, staff, and students, manifested in student and faculty unrests, agitation, anger, short temper, violence, learning difficulties, mental health disorders and behavioral challenges than in people who have not experienced trauma (Dombo & Sabatino, 2019). An overarching post-war challenge experienced in public higher institutional governance was incessant interruptions caused by faculty and student unrest. These actions were characterized by refusal to attend classes followed by violent periods of class disruptions by students. Faculty members were constantly engaged in strike actions which led to incessant closure of the institutions for periods up to two months at a time. These strike actions interrupted academic calendars and delayed students' completion. As participant PN noted,

> During periods of war people were traumatized. Periods following the war imposed on higher education administrators were the most difficult at any level in administration. Faculties and students suffered the impacts of war, and many thought they were authorities unto themselves.

Participant PB commented on the correlation between traumatization and instability caused by faculty and student unrest. According to participant PB students' attitudes and behaviors were complemented by highly aggressive and oppositional faculty whose agitation was caused by low

salaries." Participant PK indicated that some unrests were because Government paid 80% of salaries and the remaining 20% was paid by the institutions so where money was not available to pay faculty and staff salaries you end up with a crisis at hand."

Though the civil war in Liberia and Sierra Leone ended twenty years ago, student violence at the University of Liberia and William V. Tubman University, the University of Sierra Leone and Njala University are still prevalent. In 2017, a student of Njala University was killed and several hurt in clashes with the police during protest over strikes by lecturers. Lecturers at Njala University were striking over unpaid salaries and pensions leading to strikes in three Sierra Leonean cities (Associated Press, 2017). In 2021, violence erupted at the University of Sierra Leone during student leadership elections resulting to the hasty removal of the ballot boxes under police escort. The University of Liberia remained violence prone beyond to 2022. Several cases of student violent behavior were recorded with injuries to student and staff and willful destruction of property of the University and private citizens (University of Liberia, 2022). Student protest and violence at the William V. S. Tubman University over faculty strike actions in 2022, led to disruption of classes at secondary schools, closures of businesses, public facilities, and eventual resignation of the University's President (Mensah & Browne, 2022). Ironically, this violence demonstrated in public higher institutions of learning is perpetuated by indoctrination as acceptable behavior to younger secondary school students aligned to specific students' groups in universities and other higher education institutions.

Addressing Trauma in Public Higher Education Institutions

Our findings indicate there are little or no professional counselling programs to address students' violent behavior as results of trauma experienced during the civil wars. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, these violent student activities are handled through police intervention or reliance

on student handbooks for corrective punitive measures instead of recognizing and dealing with them as post- traumatic stress disorders, PTSD. Post- traumatic stress disorder is a disorder experienced by someone after watching or participating in a scary event such as physical or sexual assault or abuse, wars, disasters, or other serious events (Nimh.nih.gov.,2022). Untreated war related trauma leads to alcohol and drug use, irritability and anger which interferes with educational activities, family and social life.

Since the Liberia and Sierra Leonean wars ended twenty years ago, there is no evidence of documentation on the impact of the wars on administrators, faculty and students in public higher education institutions and the effects on educational governance. There are no services at the institutions to address student's violence on public higher institutions of learning in Liberia and Sierra Leone which could possibly be attributed to war related trauma since counselling services are limited. Traumatic cases affecting students and faculty at the University of Liberia and William V. S. Tubman University are more prevalent than in Sierra Leone.

Unwarranted Brain Drains in Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone

Brain drains in African higher education institutions is not a novelty. Africans constantly migrate to Europe and America in search of better economic opportunities. Yet, the situation becomes more desperate when flight is caused by the necessity to preserve life. Brain drains caused by civil wars are in larger numbers than normal and the effects are more impactful. Participants expressed the view that employment requirements for faculty and staff were low because most faculty fled the war situations for safety rather than for more attractive remuneration. The wars caused large scale brain drains across the institutions under study. Generally, the basic requirement to lecture at these institutions is a master's degree but institutions had to settle for far less. In the

PHEIs under study all persons with undergraduate degrees can only serve as teaching assistants but provisions were made to have them fill in gaps where necessary. As participant PL put it,

> We did a quick audit of various institutions and found out that many of their staff are master's degree holders or students, especially at Fourah Bay College and Institute of Public Administration and Management. We took a decision that they must improve themselves or be demoted from full-time lecturers to part time.

This situation is not constant. As Participant PK stated,

> There are only 16% of lecturers in our institutions of higher learning with Ph.D., the majority are master's degree holders and that is a shortfall because at a university you need a Ph.D. but because we have a brain drain due to the war, we must cope with the situation. The Liberian situation is not much different. Less than 10% of the lecturers in the universities in Liberia in this study have terminal degrees.

Participant PL opined, "the number of qualified faculty is so small for the universities to tap on, everybody is moonlighting, with one faculty member teaching at two or three universities. But we are making efforts to train more instructors abroad."

Institutional Collaboration and Regional collaboration for capacity building in Public Higher Education Institutions

Due to the numerous problems administrators experienced with the low number of teaching staff, high student enrollment and not enough funds to run the institutions, one key policy was to initiate collaboration with other institutions of higher learning locally and internationally. Public Universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone established linkages with each other for faculty and student exchange, joint research collaboration and training. The University of Liberia signed separate bilateral agreements with the University of Sierra Leone and the Njala University in September 2021. These public higher education institutions agreed specifically to undertake joint curricula reviews, external examinations, joint research and publications, course level collaboration, faculty and student exchange and faculty and staff capacity development.

Different Leadership Styles are adopted for different situations.

The ability of administrators to navigate the challenges of public higher education institutions in post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone was crucial to stabilizing these institutions and putting them on a development trajectory. Leadership is the ability to influence others or guide others in an organization to achieve set goals. The changing circumstances of stability and peace in some African countries makes it imperative for leaders to reinvent themselves to fit. Emerging from the findings of this study is adaptable leadership styles to address situations. Participants used inclusiveness, participatory decision making, consultative, strategic, visionary, transformative to describe the leadership styles used. Most Participants agreed that personal and institutional safety and continuity required treating each administrative challenge differently to lessen the impact.

Research and Publication in Post-Conflict Public Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institutions have principal responsibilities of teaching, learning, research, community service, creativity, and innovation. Aside from the core function of teaching and learning, higher education institutions engage in research to enhance learning, discovery, and scholarship. University research activities are expensive and where the institutions rely on individual faculty members to fund research activities, it is a disincentive. Nevertheless, in Liberia and Sierra Leone, one of the cardinal functions of higher education is engagement in research. The institutions under study have undertaken a limited amount of research work. Individual faculty members conduct research on contractual bases. Research offices in these institutions are not adequately staffed, and university research is expensive. For example, one participant remarked,

> We need to emphasize research at our higher education institutions, but the fundamental question is, how do you implement research when you do not have seed money? If our governments were to adequately fund higher education institutions, it would become easier for University Presidents to encourage faculty and students to

> engage in research that will be both rewarding to universities, faculty and the public.

With the shortage of researchers at the universities, the need to create a pool of research-oriented scholars with responsibility to innovate and find marketable subjects is necessary. Two thirds of the participants concluded there is the need to segregate operational and research -oriented support within government's subventions to public institutions. According to participant PC "If government can provide seed money, it will be replenished by research activities."

As it is the universities under study have limited funds for research which makes publication of professional papers difficult. Research grants must be sourced individually by faculty members from external sources which limits the amount of faculty who can access funds. The lack of professionally published peer-reviewed papers reduces the Universities' standing and rating.

Evaluation of Findings

To evaluate the findings of this study, the researcher looked at how completely and accurately the research questions were responded to or addressed. A scrutiny of the themes to ascertain which is useful for addressing the issues or highlighting something about the research. Data analysis in qualitative research has no fixed approach but is interpretative and involved with finding relationships from themes and patterns and describing them Flick (2014) & Archer, (2018). Thematic analysis is flexible and not tied to any epistemological or theoretical view (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was used for this study because it was confined to participants' expressions of their perception of occurrence, interpreting and explaining them.

For proper evaluation of the data, the researcher familiarized herself with the themes arising from the data to consider the themes participants articulated and not only those the researcher deemed important. The researcher's evaluation was based on ascertaining whether the qualitative approach was adequate to address the research questions. Responses to the semi-structured interview guide

corresponded to   the research questions. Caution was employed to understand the experiences of participants using the research methodology selected and reasons for the consequences. The researcher also considered the purpose of the research to find out whether the research purpose was adequately explained in the study. This meant looking at the study design, aims, objectives and the research questions. Other principles guiding the evaluation were methods of triangulation, sample and data collection. The researcher ensured that the sampling method and selection conformed to qualitative methods for selection of participants. The procedure ensures justification for inclusion and exclusion of participants.

The evaluation also considered data collection processes, the pilot test of the research guide, location of data collection and reasons for the selection of location, procedure for data collection and the role of the researcher. Ethical consideration and how they were adhered to form an important rationale for the conduct of the research. In the case of this study the researcher met all ethical assurances for the conduct of research not involving human subjects and obtained the requisite permits to proceed with data collection. A major evaluation criterion was determining whether the evaluation was relevant for the study. To ensure all aspects of the data collection process were considered, the researcher looked at the limitations and implications of the study.

The researcher's major concern was to identify data which addressed the research questions and objectives. The researcher was also concerned about discoveries of new themes from the data since, all themes were developed from the data without predetermination. First, the researcher evaluated the participants' perceptions of what they considered challenges in the administration of public higher education institutions in post-conflict societies and how they understood their implications. The researcher looked at the historical, situational, operational, and problem-solving contexts, and the implications of the data for current and future use. An essential part of the

analysis was to move between data from participants in Liberia and Sierra Leone to identify similarities or differences. Any interpretation of the data by the researcher was based on the responses of the participants' views, opinions or expressions of their experiences.

The researcher used thematic analysis as propounded by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Charmaz, (2014) to ascertain that point at which no new information could be discovered that advances our comprehension of the category were the points of saturation for this study. determine points of saturation, which is described as a "point when no new information can be found that adds to the understanding of the category. The findings from this study showed that administrators of public Higher education institutions had to adopt various strategies to deal with the unusual circumstances of exponential increase in student enrollment, damaged infrastructures, inadequate funding and faculty and student unrest they were confronted with. Traits exhibited by these administrators were exemplified in Machiavelli's (1518) thesis, which showed that absolutely nothing is more challenging to manage, riskier to carry out, or less certain to succeed than taking the initiative to establish a new system of things. The findings are presented in a narrative style.

Conflict situations created necessity for the establishment of more institutions of higher learning and online learning.

Since the conflict in Liberia and Sierra Leone more public higher institutions of learning have been established to deal with the huge increase in students. Ten new universities and community colleges were created. Prior to the1990 civil War, Liberia had two public universities, the University of Liberia, and William V.S. Tubman University. Between 2005 and 2022, one University and eight public Junior colleges were established. Sierra Leone added two additional public universities to the existing University of Sierra Leone and Njala University. These are in addition to several private, faith-based higher education institutions and Technical and Vocational

Training Institutes, TVETs. These measures were to absorb the huge number of students denied access to higher education because of the conflicts. One major issue was that many students were trapped behind rebel lines during the war, and when classes eventually resumed, there was a huge and challenging influx. Enrolment in public Higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone tripled in the post-war years. At the University of Liberia, student enrolment increased from 5000 in 1995 to 18,000 in 2020 while enrollment at the University of Sierra Leone jumped from 2000 to 7430 for the same period Banya (1993), Government of Liberia (2021), University of Sierra Leone (2021) & Higher Education (2022). These figures were supported by documentation that the number of student enrollment in higher education institutions in Liberia doubled from 27, 954 in 2008 to 55,000 in 2015, with the highest number at the University of Liberia (Ministry of Education, 2016). These are peak periods following the war, which ended in 2002 and 2003 in Sierra Leone and Liberia, respectively.

Inadequate funds to manage public higher institutions of learning forced administrators to consider reducing reliance on government subvention by establishing university businesses.

Contingent on the need for additional funding to adequately finance operations of public tertiary institutions, administrators sought to establish corporate entities to augment funding form the governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Though the concept is practiced successfully in other institutions, it is relatively new for the situation under study. From our findings, it is obvious that attempts for public higher institutions of learning to run business establishments are novelties which have not garnered the desired results. Attempts were made in Liberia and Sierra to Leone for the establishment of small-scale businesses, which have not impacted revenue generation significantly. At the University of Liberia, plans for the establishment for a water production factory, petrol station and printing press remained dormant while authorities scout for investors.

At the University of Sierra Leone one participant noted that the location of the University of Sierra Leone' Fourah Bay College, on the highest peak in Freetown, Sierra Leone's capital city, presented a unique opportunity for the erection of mobile phones towers for a fee. Though the amounts generated were not specified, one participant stated that funds from the erection of one mobile telephone tower on a building at the University of Liberia net about four thousand United States dollars annually.

Ebola and COVID-19 viruses forced Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone to provide online learning

Dire circumstances affecting the administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone after the conflicts were compounded by epidemics of Ebola and coronavirus virus which forced these institutions to venture into distance learning and online education despite their lack of preparedness. The results from this experiment were mixed. A lack of technical infrastructure, access to constant electricity, faculty and student preparedness made online learning a daunting task. Most of the faculty members were not computer literate, and students' experiences were largely limited to social media platforms. One participant noted:

We were compelled to go online, and that was a major challenge for us. Going full blast online was a difficult decision, but we did not want to keep the university closed. We had problems with limited internet services that do not work in most cases. Access to facilities for online learning deprived a lot of students who could have otherwise benefited from face-to-face learning.

The erratic supply of electricity exacerbated problems of access and most students had to rely on cell phones for connectivity to access online classes. eLearning portals like Moodle were not available and most classes were not interactive. Where possible in some faculties, lectures are delivered verbally through zoom or other interactive platforms. Attempts were made by the

institutions under study to provide internet services to aid instruction. As one participant commented,

> We have internet services, and it is free of charge. We have some computer labs also where students can access their platforms if they do not have personal computers. We have lecturers who are not computer literate but now 95% are more computer literate.

Most of the participants believed online learning provided opportunities to improve library facilities and opportunities for research for both faculty and students. Dilapidated and outdated books could be discarded and substituted for more modern volumes available in international libraries and research sites. Another participant, PN remarked,

> We have libraries with facilities for subscribing to online libraries where students can always access information and books. Also, in terms of library and access, the internet is amassed with information leaving the lecturers to guide students to credible websites to augment their research.

Conflict afflicted public higher institutions of higher learning utilized access to online education to reach more students and leapfrog into the provision of quality education. However, online education was introduced to the public higher education institutions after Liberia and Sierra Leone were afflicted with contagious pandemics of Ebola and coronavirus after the civil wars. Little preparation was made for online learning. Administrators, faculty, and students were forced to institute new learning methods and adapt to them simultaneously. The introduction of virtual learning platforms allowed institutions to stay open during the pandemic. It also changed the way students accessed information and learned. Faculty and staff had to adjust to innovative ways of knowledge transfer.

Leadership Styles Promote Progress or Stifle Development in Public Higher Education Institutions after Violent Civil Conflicts

Participants in the study indicated various leadership styles depending on the situation. From the findings, the researcher discerned those administrators who adopted various leadership characteristics of involving faculty, staff, and students in decision making, minimizing organizational conflicts, and increasing potential for accepting change. In organizations, transformational leaders are those who encourage critical thinking, teamwork, participation in conflict resolution, motivation, and inspire employees. Where necessary, administrators had to adopt leadership styles suitable to the challenges they were confronted with. When dealing with issues involving a lack of finance and infrastructure, administrators used innovative strategies of planning, direction setting, and independence to cope. This is characteristic of modern organizations where collective decision-making is used to effect change (Wren, 1995). Leadership styles demonstrated by administrators of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone were participatory, situational, visionary, consultative, transformational, inclusive, gender complementary and diversity oriented. Participatory leadership is when a leader invites their management staff to participate in the decision-making process. It necessitates inclusiveness, effective communication skills, and a proclivity for power sharing. Participatory leadership is consultative, involving all members of the team to share ideas and arrive at decisions in which everyone has ownership. It encourages employees' active participation and makes them responsible, self-directing, and proactive. According to Usman et al. (2021), the effect of leadership style is considered decisive when its responses can change organizational status and employees' wellbeing. Participant PR noted his leadership style was consultative.

I describe my leadership style as a consultative type. I consult with my colleagues because each of the constituent colleges is headed by a deputy vice chancellor, so decisions that I am supposed to

take alone, I consult so that we produce a collective decision. We provide a reward for the requisite work done by these staff and faculty.

Another participant PP noted,

> My leadership style was one of partnership and inclusion. I saw good in everybody because everybody as a story. As Vice Chancellor, I chaired the University Senate. If staff and deans cannot make their imports, you cannot get their support. I needed inclusion to take decisions. I ran an open-door policy which allowed people to come and hold discussions with me. I believe these minimized conflicts.

When administrators in post-conflict institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone involved faculty and staff collaboration in decision-making, conflicts were minimized. Recent research indicated that individuals experience a high sense of positivity when they engage constructively with their leaders (Atwater and Carmeli, 2009). From the findings of this research, it can be induced that one type of leadership style is not adaptive for public higher education administrators in post-conflict societies with their myriads of challenges. These problems had to be dealt with considering their urgency, nature, and gravity.

A direct correlation exists between leadership styles, leadership effectiveness, organizational effectiveness, and leaders' ability to use different leadership styles. This is particularly true of leaders in post-conflict situations who are continuously confronted with unforeseen problems. The unpredictability of the challenges constrained administrators to respond to them on a conditional basis. Responding to challenges on a case-by-case basis is situational. Situational leadership is flexible leadership that allows the leader to change their methods based on the circumstances, individuals involved, and the perspectives Walls, 2019). While most of the participants did not specifically mention situational leadership, descriptions of their leadership styles led the researcher to conclude from existing literature that their leadership styles were

situational. As one participant put it, "academics do not necessarily make good leaders or administrators, but when you are the leader and a situation arises, you have to respond to it."

Transformational leadership styles also characterized the handling of post-conflict administrative challenges in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Several participants asserted that with damaged infrastructure, poor finances, and facilities, administrators had to be innovative to function effectively. James MacGregor Burns, who developed the theory of transformational leadership, defined it as a process where leaders and followers raise each other to higher levels of morality and motivation (Burns, 1978). Emerging from civil wars, administrators and policymakers of public higher learning institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone endeavored to set new directions for programs and policies to stabilize and resuscitate their institutions using available human and material resources. This requires doing an honest assessment of situations to do what is best for the institution. According to participant PE,

> If you set up structures, it is easy to manage conflicts. We worked through various associations to win confidence and listen to grievances. With that, we were able to identify areas of need and ensure quality assurance in both academics and administration.

This sort of transformative leadership experience helped reform programs and policies. While all the administrators in the institutions in this study did not use the same approach to address challenges, their leadership behavior yielded comparable results.

Leadership styles gathered from the study were varied. Aspects of administrative, scientific, transformational, participatory, situational, and visionary leadership were exhibited by administrators. Administrators tended to use different leadership styles to suit situations. Depending on the situation different types of leadership styles were employed to address the challenges encountered. In instances of unrest, most leaders adopted participatory leadership styles by seeking advice and opinions and holding discussions with senior staffers, faculty, and students

on how to handle situations. At the University of Liberia, One President established a student advisory council comprising student leaders who met him periodically to discuss issues affecting students. This interaction afforded the opportunity to gain experience of possible disruptions, poor student services and take proactive decisions. Administrators in public higher education institutions in Sierra Leone worked through staff associations and academic staff associations to achieve the same goals.

Relations of Research findings to Research Questions

Research Question 1

What are the challenges in administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

The findings related to research question one and objective one of the study which sought to identify the challenges encountered by administrators of public higher education institutions in post -conflict societies identified challenges of infrastructural damage, inadequate financing, post-traumatic stress disorders, effects of free education policies on quality education delivery, external influences, incessant faculty and student unrests, digitization and effects of Ebola and Covid 19 pandemics. Participants from Liberia and Sierra Leone indicated the massive destruction of properties, traumatization of faculty and students and inadequate funding made the administration of institutions difficult to manage. Administrators had to deal with multiple problems simultaneously, which tasked their abilities to function effectively. Rebuilding damaged infrastructure was tedious because funding was not readily available, and governments prioritized primary and secondary education over tertiary. College-age students denied access to education during the war years clamored for admission while administrators struggled to balance enrollment with available facilities and staff. The wars affected everybody, and people were traumatized.

Households were affected and getting the best out of lecturers was difficult during and after the wars. Many lecturers had not recovered from the impact of the wars and their attitudes and behavior imposed serious difficulty on administrators. Participants also reported periods of instability, especially over student leadership struggles due to aggressiveness and misbehavior. This was compounded by poorly paid lecturers who were aggrieved by the levels of their salaries compared to pre-war remuneration. Amid those challenges, institutions had to remain open and function. Inadequate funding of public higher education institutions makes it difficult to hire and retain quality faculty and staff. Student and faculty unrests in Sierra Leone abated sooner than at the University of Liberia where in 2022, faculties were boycotting classes in demand of higher salaries and better working conditions, and students were constantly on the rampage, throwing stones, erecting roadblocks and damaging properties. The University of Sierra Leone is more stable than Njala University, where two years ago students' protests over faculty boycott of classes had to be quieted by police.

Participants from Liberia and Sierra Leone agreed that poor government funding to public higher education institution affects their ability to govern effectively. Though for all institutions under study, payments of salaries for faculty and employees reduced the burdens on administrators, the inadequacy of the funding makes it difficult to introduce new academic programs and develop infrastructures. In Sierra Leone, majority of the students, about 70% to 80% are on government scholarships but challenges exist because monies for students under government sponsorship are not paid institutions regularly. Administrators must rely on fees from privately sponsored students for operational expenses, creating serious financial difficulty.

In Liberia, since 2019, the government adopted a free tertiary education policy and harmonized salaries in accordance with civil service standards. Harmonization and free tertiary

education created salary disparities and direct control of the institution's finances by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, MFDP, which manages government expenditures. The University of Liberia must send its payroll and operational accounts to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning for verification and payment monthly. This is a deviation of previous policies where Government's allotment to the Universities were paid in advance to the institutions based on approved budgetary allotments in the national budget. Employment of new faculty, faculty and staff promotions and program expansions are subject to approvals by the Ministry of Finance which equates the public universities to any government ministry, agency or commission. This policy which stultifies institutional growth and development grew out of complaints from the Faculty and Staff Associations over salary disparities. Issues of maintenance, employment and operations must meet the approval of the Ministry of finance which monitors payrolls monthly. Tuition fees for students are paid based on the number of registered students at rates determined by the Ministry of Finance and administrators of public tertiary institutions not based on actual costs of education per student. Administrators at the University of Liberia concede that this payment method yields more funding compared to previous arrangements where a huge number of students were placed on scholarships by politicians who did not meet their obligations leading to uncollectible debts.

In Sierra Leone, the Government pays the salaries of faculty and staff and rates prescribed for tuition and fees at the public universities are handled through government scholarships. The Sierra Leonean government provides the highest number of scholarships for students in public higher education institutions. Though the scholarship funds are often delayed, the up-to-date payment of salaries and wages for faculty and staff minimizes potential agitation by faculty and staff.

There are also problems associated with government funding of public higher education institutions. While the governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone allow PHEIs to collect registration, laboratory and student activity fees, these are woefully inadequate and for political reasons the governments of both Liberia and Sierra Leone refuse to allow increments. In most instances in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the government subventions are delayed and not proportionate to the actual costs of educating students.

Research Question 2

How did administrators respond to the challenges in the administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

Administrators responded to challenges in public higher education institutions by advocating for the enactment of laws to increase polytechnics, junior colleges and universities to meet the rising demands of student enrolment since the absorption of all qualified candidates was not possible. In Sierra Leone, the Polytechnic Act of 2001 for the creation of technical and vocational schools, the Tertiary Education Commission Act of 2001, and the 2005 New University Act and the establishment of the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education Act provided legal frameworks to absorb some of the shocks associated with poorly prepared over-age youths who could not enter college and high enrollment in public higher education institutions. The 2005 University Act provided for the establishment of private higher education institutions which helped alleviate problems of high enrollment and provided opportunities for parents who could afford higher tuition to choose alternative institutions. Additionally, a Tertiary Education commission was established to provide structures and standards for vocational and technical institutions, colleges, and universities. More expediently, the Sierra Leone Government recognized the enormous responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and in 2018 split the Ministry into two

separating basic and secondary education from technical and higher education for easy supervision and monitoring. The establishment of a new ministry of technical and higher education was to ascertain respectability, credibility and professionalism to technical education while providing degree options for technical courses beyond certificate and national diploma levels (Ministry of Technical and Higher Education, 2022). This division concentrated job responsibilities to specific areas and plummeted higher education administration to new levels by linking people to developmental realities. Liberia continues with one Ministry of Education with the minister serving as Ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees to all Public Universities and Higher institutions of Learning and Chairperson of the National Commission on Higher Education.

In Liberia, there were no standards for quality assurance and a National Commission on Higher Education, NCHE, created in 1989 by an Act of Legislature was dormant due to the war. The University of Liberia served as a standard for quality and had to rely on a consultant hired by the United Nations Development Program, UNDP and the United Nations Education and Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO for the development of a strategic plan to address national higher education needs. This plan addressed issues of curriculum adjustment, gender, ethnic balance, poor academic performance, and training. Entrance level scores for admission were adjusted to 60% for Mathematics and 70% for English. The public universities management structure was weak, and the President of the University had to teach undergraduate courses in the evening while dealing with administrative challenges during regular working hours from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

More stressful for Administrators was weak higher education governance, due to the dormancy of the National Commission on Higher Education from 1990 to 2011. The United States Government program for the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriates Nationals, (Tokten),

hired and expatriated Liberian nationals to work at the University of Liberia and provide instruction, and training about higher education governance. This was buttressed by a Sierra Leonean consultant paid by the UNDP to develop guidelines and standards for tertiary education.

In Sierra Leone, like Liberia, the quality of education dropped considering employability and output of the graduates. The brain drains and poorly qualified staff, lack of instructional facilities and inadequate funding reduced the quality of education provided by public higher education institutions. Collaborative efforts by public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone to handle issues of curriculum harmonization, faculty and student exchange, joint research partnerships, faculty and staff development is enhancing quality in higher education. The University of Liberia, the University of Sierra Leone, the Ernest Bah Koromah University and Njala University signed memoranda of understanding to cooperate resulting in program harmonization, capacity building and exchange (Memoranda of Understanding between the Universities of Liberia and Sierra Leone (2021), MOU between the University of Liberia and Ernest Bah Koromah University (2021) and Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Liberia and Njala University (2021). Under these arrangements, numerous collaborative ventures between these institutions, especially in information sharing, research and faculty development have ensued in quality assurance, faculty development and joint project collaboration.

The maintenance of peace and stability in Liberia and Sierra Leone were paramount to the development of PHEIs. The mandates of the Lome Peace Accord of 1999 to end the war in Sierra Leone and Comprehensive Peace accord on Liberia crafted in 2003, by stakeholders to the Sierra Leonean and Liberian conflicts involved peace maintenance. The University of Liberia involvement in peace building and maintenance was the establishment of the Kofi Annan Institute

for Conflict Transformation, (KAITC), to ensure the University of Liberia relevance in the maintenance of peace, security and national stability. In Sierra Leone administrators and policy makers agree higher education can assist in peace building and maintenance. But higher education is not counted when considering matters of peace and security while emphasis is placed on basic education. Importantly, the focus of international organizations is centered more on basis education than higher education as evidenced by reports which state reconstruction in basic education has more important ramifications for the entire system without recognizing that higher education can be effective in building countries plagued by civil wars.

Administrators in Liberia and Sierra Leone addressed the challenge of poor infrastructure by turning to their respective governments and outside sources for financial assistance to repair damaged infrastructure and construct new ones. Administrators at the University of Liberia received funding from the Peoples Republic of China to build a new administration building, classrooms, and faculty. staff and students' residential facilities of the University of Liberia at its new 5800-acre site in Fendall, eighteen miles from the main campus in the capital, Monrovia. The Monrovia campus, covering eleven acres of land, had grown too congested for the spiraling student enrollment and the construction of new academic facilities. Movement to Fendall necessitated transporting students from Monrovia to Fendall, which increased operational costs.

In Sierra Leone, administrators relied on funds from the Arab Bank for Development in Africa, (BADEA) and Kuwait funds to build damaged infrastructure. There was no funding from the European Union or the World bank for tertiary education. Funding was also obtained from the ECOWAS Exim bank. Administrators and policy makers in Liberia and Sierra Leone responded to administrative challenges differently.

The free education policies in Liberia and Sierra Leone are approached from different perspectives. In Sierra Leone, the free education policy targets primary and secondary education to encourage parents to send their wards to school. The policy coupled with the Sierra Leonean rural electrification project resulted in students from the rural areas scoring better results than urban counterparts, making them better prepared to deal with the rigors of college education. In Liberia, the free education policy targets students in public higher education institutions without any merit base criteria disincentivizing excellent outputs. The Liberian free education policy which seeks to provide higher education for impoverish youths conversely results to more students from private and faith base schools entering public higher education institutions at the University of Liberia and the William V. S. Tubman University than students from public secondary schools, especially those from rural areas. Private higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone charge fees far above those charged by public or government owned higher education institutions. The same holds true for tuition fees for private and faith base secondary schools which exceed tuition costs of public universities. The indication is that students who can afford tuition fees are beneficiaries of the free education policy instead of students unable to afford fees.

Capacity Building of Faculty and Staff

The attainment of a higher academic degree normally is the requirement for employment as a lecturer in public higher institutions of learning. Often these lecturers have content knowledge but are woefully deficient in pedagogy which makes teaching and learning difficult. This situation has been addressed in Liberia by the establishment of teaching and learning units to prepare lecturers to cope with current realities. The focus of these units has been training in information and communication technology to bridge the digital divide between face-to-face learning and online learning. Faculty and staff development is carried out through the Department of

Institutional Development and Planning, which sends faculty for capacity development at the master's and terminal degree levels. 2022 statistics showed a total of seventy-nine faculty members were obtaining graduate and postgraduate studies internationally, financed by grants and scholarships. The Universities of Sierra Leone and Njala also obtained scholarships for faculty to obtain terminal degrees. The University of Sierra Leone addressed this problem of a lack of pedagogical training by insisting that all incoming faculty have compulsory pedagogical training as a prerequisite for teaching. Compulsory pedagogical training improves content delivery and output as well as students' abilities to understand lectures.

External influence

External influences on the administration of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone dictate how administrators govern these institutions. In Liberia, the President of Liberia is Visitor or Chancellor of all public universities. The visitor to a University is a person who attends university functions for the purpose of performing honored duties such as the induction of a President of Vice Chancellor. Though rooted in European history, the role of the visitor to an academic institution like the University of Liberia is a titular head who supersedes the President of the University. The guiding instruments or charters of the Universities in Africa vary in the roles and functions of a visitor to the University. In Liberia, the Visitor to the University recommends to the Board of Trustees a person from a short list of applicants for appointment to high-ranking offices of the President of all Public Higher institutions of learning and members of the Board of Trustees. Until 2021, the President of Sierra Leone was also Chancellor to all public institutions of higher learning in Sierra Leone until he recused himself from the chancellorship and appointed a new chancellor for each higher education institution. While this move is necessary to reduce political influence, appointments to chancellorships are still being made by the President.

The shadow influence of the Presidents is inherent in decisions made by University Chancellors and Presidents. For example, issues of student acceptance, disciplinary actions and appointment of key officers are sometimes influenced by calls from politicians based on their interests. These interests vary from solicitation of votes, alignment to their constituencies or personal affiliation.

Research Question 3

What are the impacts of the challenges in administration of public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

Research question three is aligned with objective three of this study to find out the impacts of the challenges on administration of public higher education institutions in post conflict societies of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Impacts of the challenges in administration of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone are similar in some instances but differ in others. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, the poor staff quality, brain drain, poor infrastructure, inadequate financing, post-traumatic stress disorders, faculty, staff, and student unrest affected the quality higher education delivery the same way. Administrators had to grapple with the lack of facilities, little or no teaching materials. These included understaffing, damaged infrastructure and facilities for teaching and learning, external influences, and poor attempts at commercializing higher education.

On issues of post-traumatic stress disorders, the universities under study have provisions for psychosocial counselling. The University of Sierra Leone has a system of referral to the Sierra Leone psychiatric teaching hospital for cases deemed necessary. The Sierra Leone Psychiatric Teaching Hospital, the oldest in sub- Saharan Africa, remained functional after the war. In Liberia, the public Catherine Mills Rehabilitation center, was destroyed, leaving little options for referrals for mental health disorders. The only psychiatric hospital functioning in Liberia, the Grant memorial Hospital, originally a private facility with capacity for 60 persons is now government

operated with over 150 patients. Liberia has one psychiatrist for a population of over four million people. This makes referrals from the institutions of higher learning for PTSD from public higher learning institutions difficult. More professional help is needed in Liberia and Sierra Leone for students suffering traumatic experiences from the civil wars, Ebola, and Covid 19 because these experiences manifest in transgenerational aggressive behavior, and the inability to address disagreement non-violently.

During the war years, societal structures broke down and young people grew up fending for themselves without any parental guidance on acceptable behavior of values, mores, and norms. Faculty-student interaction is poor due to lack of communication which breeds conflicts, poor listening, and poor learning. Ironically, traumatic stress disorder is not limited to students in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Faculty and staff also experienced traumatic incidences of physical threats to life and properties, displacement, inability to provide family needs and direct involvement, and witnessing of death and destruction. Students Moreover, aggressive student behavior makes instructors limit their interaction with students to the classroom. Higher education administrators need more assessment and training on how to manage instructional conflicts, mental health counseling, stigmatization, constructive engagement, and confidentiality. These will help reduce incidences of violence, faculty, and student unrest. However, these cannot be done without the requisite institutions and trained personnel to handle cases since most of the signs and symptoms are only discernable to professional

Research Question 4

What mitigation strategies are possible for the challenges in the administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

The findings of this study address research question four in relation to objective four which is the determination of strategies that could be employed in the administration of public higher education institutions in post-conflict societies of Liberia and Sierra Leone. The public institutions of higher learning in Liberia and Sierra Leone under study mitigated challenges through the establishment of regional partnerships and collaboration for capacity building to counter the brain drain, poor staff quality, quality assurance and curricula harmonization. In 2021, the University of Liberia signed three memoranda of understanding with the University of Sierra Leone, Njala University, and the Ernest Bai Koroma University in Sierra Leone for staff development, joint research partnerships, faculty and staff exchange, and curricula harmonization (Jalloh, 2021). Additionally, faculty and staff development are supported by the individual institutions under study through grants and scholarships and internal staff development programs, which allow employed staff and faculty to attend graduate courses offered by the consenting institutions. This collaboration in faculty and staff development regionally reduces the high cost of educating faculty in Europe and America and encourages the training of more personnel locally.

On quality assurance, the University of Liberia, based on memorandum of understanding with the University of Sierra Leone embarked on collaboration for the establishment of a quality assurance unit at the University of Liberia and the harmonization in the curriculum of engineering colleges of both institutions. The institutions under study have established faculty and student exchange programs and joint research collaboration. More importantly, lines of communication have been established between administrators of the targeted public higher education institutions to address mutual problems.

Another regional collaboration is manifested through the support from the Njala University for the establishment of a regional center of excellence in fisheries at the University of Liberia

through a grant to the University of Liberia from the World Bank facilitated by the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority. The objective of the project is to develop programs in fisheries at the intermediate, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels and construct classrooms, offices, and a hostel for visiting guests and researchers. Administrators and staff used provisions of the memorandum of Understanding between the University of Liberia and Njala University as the basis of collaboration for the establishment of the regional center.

Evaluation of the Findings and Reconnection with Literature

To evaluate the findings of this study, the researcher used thematic analysis which is useful for qualitative studies by identifying useful themes in the data to address an issue or highlight something about the research. Data analysis in qualitative research has no fixed approach but is interpretative and involved with finding relationships from themes and patterns and describing them (Lacey & Luff, 2007, Flick, 2014 & Archer, 2018). Thematic analysis is flexible and not tied to any epistemological or theoretical view (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was used for this study because it was confined to participants' expressions of their perception of occurrence, interpreting and explaining them. The themes were developed manually and corroborated using the CAQDAS, Taguette based on actual transcripts of recordings of interviews, recording of connections between codes, engendering explanations from them and their relations to the research questions. The researcher acquainted herself with the data by reading and re-reading it to find similar patterns from the different interviews. During this process, notes were made on the impressions of the data, looking at similarities and differences for data organization. The major concern of the researcher was to identify data which addressed the research questions and objectives.

The evaluation of the findings connected with the literature through the examination of administrative, scientific, human relations, modern leadership and trait theories and their use in the administration of public higher institutions of learning in post-conflict situations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Various documentation of educational governance in developed, developing countries and Liberia and Sierra Leone were considered. The similarities and differences were examined against the backdrop of educational governance in post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone. The findings showed that while there were some issues of educational governance under normal circumstances, they increased due to the hassles of the war and brought with them additional war related problems.

Summary

The objective of Chapter four was to present the findings of this study which examined the challenges in administration of post-conflict societies in the 21st century: a case study of Liberia and Sierra Leone. The findings were evaluated according to thematic analysis, which codes findings, merges them to form corresponding themes, triangulate, analyzes and interprets them consistently with the qualitative study design.   Coded data and themes were reviewed to match the meanings to the themes. Key administrative challenges emerging from the findings were (1) Damaged infrastructures (2) inadequate funding, (3) poor qualification of Faculty and Staff (3) Online learning and digitization, (4) poor quality assurance and academic standards (5) Faculty /Student Unrests (6) High Student Enrollment (7) Political interference (8) Free education, (9) Impact of Ebola and Covid 19 pandemic on activities of the institutions and, (10) Traumatization. Some aspects of the findings are related to the literature as presented in chapter two, particularly because some of the challenges in the administration of public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone were comparable to some problems encountered in administering public

higher education institutions in America, Europe, and other countries in West Africa. However, findings from this study transcend normal administrative situations because they relate to specific challenges in post-conflict situations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Participants cited problems of inadequate financing of public higher institutions of learning, damaged infrastructures, interference by government officials, introduction of the difficult policies of free education, challenges of the introduction of online teaching and learning to address issues of pandemics, high student enrollment and proliferation of higher education institutions. Mitigating strategies adopted to address these challenges were highlighted and include regional collaboration among the public higher education institutions for research and publication, joint and single capacity building, faculty and student exchange, establishment of quality assurance units within the University of Liberia.

On the issue of funding public higher education institution of learning in Liberia and Sierra Leone respondents presented dismal pictures of the inability of government to fund these institutions to the level necessary to deliver equity and quality education. However, cases in Liberia and Sierra Leone differ in the level of support. Education budget in Liberia is less than 16 percent for the entire educational sector from nursery to tertiary education while funds allotted to education in Sierra Leone is 20 percent. This puts Sierra Leone in a category of few countries with a budget of over 20 percent to education while Africa's average is about 15 percent, and Sierra Leone is 6% above that (World Bank, 2022).

In Liberia, the President of the country remains Visitor to all public institutions of higher learning with powers to make final determination of the head of the institution. Academically, a visitor to a University connotes a person covered by legislation who is not a post- doctoral fellow or an individual with an academic appointment. In the case of the University of Liberia and

William V. S. Tubman University, the charter of these institutions devolves the title of Visitor to the President of the Republic and grants him or her exclusive powers to nominate Presidents of Universities to the Board of Trustees. Determination of policy directions in recent times have been the prerogative of the Visitor. While search committees may vet potential appointees, three names are submitted for the selection of one candidate appointed by the President (Visitor) to head a public institution of learning. This includes public universities, community, and technical colleges.

In Sierra Leone, the President of the country relinquished his position as Chancellor of all public institutions of higher learning. In November 2022, the President of Sierra Leone, Julius Maada Bio installed four chancellors of public Universities in Sierra Leone assured them of autonomy and mandated them to ensure integrity in the institutions (Sierra Leone Government official website, 2021). The Sierra Leonean University Act of 2021 provides for the public Universities in Sierra to appoint Chancellors. This should be a major step in breaking strongholds of the President on public universities through the appointment of Vice Chancellors while he serves as chancellor. However, removal of the President as Chancellor of these public higher education institutions does not prevent his involvement in public higher institutions of learning since he (the President) is still clothed with the responsibility to appoint individual chancellors. The Universities act, 2021 repeals and replaces the University of Sierra Leone Act, 2005 (Act No.1 of 2005), and provides for the continuation of the University of Sierra Leone and the establishment of Milton Margai University of Education and Technology, the Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology, the Technical University of Sierra Leone and the University of Science and Technology. The act also provides for the establishment of other public universities and private universities. The goal of the Universities Act of 2021 is to create and expand university education to improve human capital development in Sierra Leone. On the introduction of business activities

to augment funding of public higher institutions of learning in Liberia and Sierra Leone, current activities do not highlight any substantial amounts generated to impact operational funds.

However, online education presents alternative to face-to-face instructions for more students, especially students with full time jobs, to benefit from tertiary education. Many implications of online learning were provided by participants. Some participants enumerated the positive effects while others commented on the lack of technological access, computer labs and constant electricity supply to operate effective online learning platforms. In some instances, faculty and senior staff members experienced difficulties operating and adjusting to the new technologies for teaching and learning.

Reforms in Tertiary education in Liberia and Sierra Leone are driven by the African Union's Agenda 2063, which sets benchmarks to transform Africa into an international driving force. Agenda 2063 seeks in its aspiration one, to construct an affluent Africa, based on all-encompassing growth and sustainable development (Agenda 2063). Under aspiration one is embedded in the determination to eradicate poverty and build prosperity and economic transformation. Aspiration one also stresses the determination to provide long-term stewardship of its natural and human resources by developing well-educated, citizenry-based science, technology, and innovation institutions where no child is left out of school because of poverty or discrimination (Agenda, 2063). Agenda 2063 is a framework for sustainable development in Africa and encourages a change in the education systems of Africa based on quality and relevance. Educational reforms in Liberia and Sierra Leone are also driven by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number four, which emphasizes the need to guarantee comprehensive, equal, high-quality education and encourage everyone to pursue lifelong learning (Agenda for Transformation, 2018). Liberia and Sierra Leone are members of the

African Union and United Nations and under obligations to achieve target 4.3 on sustainable educational development which emphasizes the need to guarantee equal access to all women and men to affordable technical, vocational tertiary including University, by the year 2030 (Agenda for Transformation 2030, 2018).

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Higher education administrators in public institutions after civil conflicts experience more serious problems or are confronted with new ones. The world is experiencing violent conflicts in places such as Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, and Libya. These conflicts have direct impacts on social institutions, such as education, health care delivery, and national development. The longer the conflict, the more likely it is that devastating impacts will result. Civil Wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone ended a few years ago, and both countries are still striving to return to normalcy. Attitudes and actions exhibited during the wars are still present in today's national governance issues, including higher education administration. Though there are marked differences between approaches to dealing with these issues in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the resultant circumstances are the same.

Education and conflicts are recent areas of study detailing issues of prevention, peacebuilding, funding, and quality education (Pacheco 2013, Gbollie & David, 2014). Issues related to administrative challenges have not been tackled extensively. In the African context, challenges are more profound because these institutions operate in developing countries with poor economies, youthful populations, and high illiteracy rates (World Bank, 2017). Liberia and Sierra Leone border each other and experienced civil wars concurrently for periods spanning more than ten years. These conflicts directly affected the educational governance of the largest public higher education institutions in these countries. This study pinpoints the correlations between violent conflicts and higher education administrative challenges using data collected from primary sources for analysis and interpretation.

The principal objectives of this study were to provide a new approach to the examination of public higher education administration in post-conflict societies to determine how conflicts sway

leadership styles and quality education delivery. The study is important because it leads to the discovery of new knowledge and approaches to higher education governance after violent civil conflicts.

The findings of this study could lead to the discovery of new methods of higher education governance and serve as a guide to public higher education administrators who experience conflict situations and researchers who intend to gain further knowledge in related areas.

This chapter consists of five parts. Part, one contextualizes the study by highlighting the problem statement, research purpose, significance, methods, and ethical considerations. Part two looks at the implications of the findings based on discussions built around any possible limitations that could influence the outcomes of the interpretation of the findings and how the results relate to the problem statement. Part three comprises recommendations that can possibly be used for the application of research findings to similar situations. Part four suggests avenues for further research, while part five concludes the chapter.

Implications

Implications for Quality Education in Post-Conflict Societies

Conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone drained public higher education institutions of qualified faculty and staff. This acute shortage of qualified faculty, coupled with high enrolment, had profound consequences for the quality of education delivery. Administrators were challenged to employ more unqualified teachers in the classrooms and retool and train others. The mediocre quality of students leaving secondary schools meant many were unqualified to enter higher education institutions. Documents from admission exams show that less than 20 percent of students sitting entrance exams have qualified to enter. In 2013, all 25,000 students who sat entrance exams to enter the University of Liberia failed to meet the required score of 70%. The

University of Liberia was constrained to drop standards to admit students by reducing required scores to 50% for Mathematics and 70% for English. Candidates' inability to qualify for admission could be attributed to quick-fix accelerated learning educational interventions during the civil wars for primary and secondary students. Accelerated learning programs in Liberia and Sierra Leone reduced six-year learning programs to four to allow students to enter the job market or pursue further education (Boisvert et al., 2017). However, due to the civil conflicts that kept most university students out of school, a massive influx of students into public universities compelled the administrators to introduce remediation programs for students and advanced training and retraining for faculty.

Implication of Free Higher Education

The implication of free tuition for students, with different contexts for Liberia and Sierra Leone, demonstrates the need for infusing money into the education sector. In 2018, a tuition-free policy for all public higher institutions of learning was announced in Liberia and subsequently passed into Law in 2021 (University of Liberia, 2021) while in Sierra Leone the free education policy targets primary and secondary school students. Findings from the research showed the difficulties administrators encountered, and the approaches used to alleviate those challenges. The findings of this study contribute to the works of the literature review by providing new challenges specifically dealing with public higher education administration in post-conflict situations. These discoveries provide a more in-depth understanding of challenges encountered in the administration of public higher education institutions in post-conflict societies which can guide administrators and policy makers. This study revealed how these challenges were addressed from individual, institutional and national perspectives. The findings also showed how violent civil conflicts have more extenuating effects on society than just physical destruction and loss of lives. The most

dangerous impact of violent conflict is wounds inflicted on the human mind which are not readily observable. These manifest in various forms of post-traumatic stress disorder, which left unattended to, leads to drug addiction, memory loss, poor attention to lessons, violent behavior, and disregard for authority and the rule of law.

Participants in the study recalled the periods between 1990 and 2010 imposed upon higher education administrators the most difficult because many faculties and students had not recovered from the impact of the war and thought they were authorities to themselves by refusing to take instructions from anyone. This situation determined how administrators governed in an atmosphere where faculties and students behaved as though they were more knowledgeable to run the affairs of the institutions than those charged with the responsibilities.

This study is built on the existing body of research on higher education governance by highlighting hidden factors that influenced administrative decision-making and policy implementation derived from informants. By constantly comparing data, it was possible to demonstrate the interplay of civil conflicts, administrative challenges, and workable solutions. This study buttresses previous work done on the challenges of higher education institutions in Africa. Smith (2014), Sumoworo (2015), and Asamoah & Mackin (2015) acknowledge the challenges in higher education, such as funding, high enrollment, poor infrastructure, external influences, etc. These challenges, which are noted in the findings, happened in different interrelated degrees and under different circumstances, which are not isolated. Participants in this study noted the complexities of dealing with these challenges, which tended to appear simultaneously. For instance, participants spoke of problems encountered by administrators trying to stabilize the institutions and concurrently dealing with issues of damaged infrastructure, inadequate funding, and unrest. Consequently, it was virtually impossible to tackle the challenges

in isolation because it was difficult to deal with one problem while others lingered. The interrelationship between these challenges constrained administrators to find innovative ways to handle them. For example, administrators had to deal with traumatized faculty demanding more than the institution could afford and not disrupt institutional operations, providing quality education while lowering the standards to allow for the admission of unqualified students and responding to faculty demands for promotions in the absence of meeting requirements for tenure and promotion. The administrative challenges could not be addressed easily yet they required prompt action. Data from the interviews show these issues occurred simultaneously and had to be managed concurrently. Administrators employed immediately after the civil conflicts experienced more challenges than others who followed five to ten years later when peace was restored. Participants indicated that people who worked at these institutions in administrative positions before, remain in country during the conflicts and were re-appointed to the same or higher positions because they found it easier to deal with the multiplicity of problems than newly appointed people who did not experience the conflicts. More importantly, they experienced the wars and were not intimidated by the violence and threats. By engaging faculty and administrative staff in decision making and conflict resolutions processes, administrators minimized potential internal conflicts and provided understanding to key policy issues and administrative bottlenecks.

Finally, another implication was the introduction of online education (eLearning platforms) or distance learning to solve problems associated with pandemics of Ebola and Covid 19 which plagued Liberia and Sierra Leone following in the aftermath of the civil conflicts. Due to public policy of isolation because of the contagiousness of these diseases, academic institutions closed due to Ebola but remained open during the period of Covid 19. Despite planning and availability of technology to support distance learning, public education institutions were forced to introduce

online learning digital technology to provide distance education as an alternative to closing public institutions of higher learning. The institutions under study were ill- prepared for digitization due to intermittent electricity supply, internet access and computer illiteracy. Training faculty and staff and providing internet connectivity were necessary to avoid closure due to the epidemic. Participants in the study agreed that face to face classrooms were impractical due to the impacts of epidemics. Compulsion to introduce online learnings provided opportunities to leapfrog and catch up with institutions providing teaching and learning through distance education. This decision constrained faculty, staff and students to learn new skills for teaching and learning, a feat more difficult for faculty members since students were already versed in techniques of social media.

Recommendations for application

Future administrators of public higher learning institution in Liberia and Sierra Leone may find the results of the study useful. Many studies have concentrated on the challenges of higher education institutions in Africa, but this study presents additional perspective to the challenges by highlighting those associated with post conflict situations. Participants in this study pointed out many challenges which forced administrators to apply immediate options to address instead of processes which require long term planning and deliberations.

Many of these approaches are in experimental stages but administrators in conflict situations can draw on their experiences. This study gives a deeper appreciation of the kinds of challenges experienced by public higher education administrators in post -conflict societies and the approaches taken to address them which have not been addressed sufficiently by researchers and managers of the institutions. Additionally, this study indicates that older students with numerous problems enter public higher education institutions ill-prepared to cope with academic demands. War related experiences create social and psychological problems of post-traumatic

stress disorders, depression, stress and anxieties which make students more aggressive, demanding, and violent (Musisi & Kinyanda, 2020). It is important therefore, that public higher education administrators recognize these tendencies and introduce early measures to deal with them. Violent actions by faculty and students might have deeper rooted mental and psychological problems than present in strike actions and violence. Student and faculty's unrests might go beyond demands for services, access, amenities, and remunerations. As some participants suggested, adequate funding can calm faculties and students because administrators will be able to finance programs and services and minimize the demands. However, funding alone is insufficient to deal with deep-rooted psychological and social problems which are not easily detected. Hence, it is recommended that higher education administrators dealing with conflict-related situations include mental health practitioners on their counseling staff.

A key recommendation emanating from the findings, which is applicable to public higher education administrators, is the novel approach to establishing corporate institutions of learning where revenues can be generated from activities unrelated to teaching and learning. From the study, it was found out that most of the war-affected public higher institutions of learning, which were the objects of this study, garnered funds from establishments of businesses and lease of their assets to corporate entities. Participants mentioned the need to generate income to complement the subventions provided by the government which accounts for salary payments and operation but are woefully inadequate to fund services, institutional development, and research. Because the core functions of universities are teaching and learning, research and community engagements, operating corporate fund-generating entities to finance higher education institutions was new. While government funding of public institutions is inadequate, the exploration of independent

corporate engagement in financing public higher education institutions presents opportunities for institutional financial independence.

The practical implication of this study is that public universities will always be underfunded and the ever-growing pressure to attain university education places more burdens on administrators to create innovative means to generate funds. Public higher education administrators are faced with the problems of delivering quality education with meager resources and bridging the resource gap is challenging (Oketch, 2016, & Tefera & Altbach, 2004). The decision to utilize businesses to support public education institutions is incontrovertible. In this research endeavor. The participant engaged the services of three staff members to consult with other public higher education institutions in Ghana and Nigeria to find out strategies for additional financial support. It was from that report that the University of Liberia resolved to establish a printing press and water production plant under a Separate arrangement with directors and managers unconnected to the University of Liberia.

Most public higher education institutions tend to augment revenues from external sources through grants or public and private partnerships. In some instances, cost cutting measures are introduced by institutional collaboration. Administrators in post conflict public higher institutions of learning indicated that cooperation and collaboration with other institutions provided opportunities for faculty and staff development, exchange, and research. In 2021, the University of Liberia, the University of Sierra Leone and Njala University signed joint collaborative agreement for training and exchange of both students and faculty, work study programs, studies at the University of Liberia; and the University of Sierra Leone to build the capacity of faculty and staff, promote collaborative research, develop a tri-partite research link among University of Liberia and other Universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone with similar interest; including

publication, study visits lectureship and seminars and cultural exchanges and the development of terminal degree programs in relevant disciplines (Government of Sierra Leone,2021). As a result of this institutional collaboration, the University of Liberia is benefiting from the establishment of a quality assurance unit facilitated by the University of Sierra Leone and both institutions have joint research projects and faculty development. This reduces costs of training in non-African countries and strengthens the research capacities of the institutions. This is of particular interest considering the objectives of the study, which were to find out how challenges affecting the administration of public higher education institutions in post-conflict societies were mitigated.

Decentralizing Higher Education in Post-Conflict Societies

Participants also indicated that other mitigating strategies to high student enrollment which have implications for administrators and policy makers, were decentralization of education and digitization. In Liberia, public institutions of higher learning granting master's, bachelor's and associate degrees increased from two to eleven, one university and ten junior colleges (National Commission on Higher Education, 2021). The situation in Sierra Leone was slightly different. Public universities increased from two to five while Technical and Vocational Institutes were raised to degree-granting statuses with 80 % of teaching devoted to practical work and 20% to theory to accommodate overage youths, unqualified for university education (Ministry of Technical and Higher Education, 2021). To cope with the situation further, the Sierra Leonean government broke up the ministry of education into two parts, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary education, and the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education. Participants hold the view that the decision to split the Ministry of Education enabled the two Ministries of Education to concentrate on specific areas without being overburden with numerous activities managing basic, secondary, technical, and higher education. These public higher education institutions are not situated in one section of

the country but are distributed to rural areas, making higher education accessible and available to people who would not have been able to relocate to attend classes in the city. Decentralization of higher education is also built around the national development needs of the country. Decentralization of education institutions will concentrate on disciplines based on the resources available where they are located and the required needs of industries such as mining, forestry, and agriculture (PF1). It minimizes problems caused by concentrating on the responsibilities for early childhood, primary, secondary, TVET and higher education in one entity, which could be overburdened. It is recommended that governments consider building a middle class of cadres to fill gaps where tertiary institutions are unable.

Digitization and Online learning in Post-Conflict Societies

Participants also noted the added advantage digitization has given to absorbing more students in higher education institutions. The despair, destruction, and limited resources to manage public institutions of learning were compounded by the twin epidemics of Ebola and Corona -19 outbreak in Liberia and Sierra Leone which forced public institutions of higher learning to migrate their instructions to digital platforms. The Ebola virus disease (EVD), a hemorrhagic fever, which occurred in West Africa between 2014 and 2016, is highly contagious and often fatal in humans. Liberia and Sierra Leone closed all schools to deal with the problem. Higher education activities were interrupted, and public universities were used for referral centers, as in the case of the University of Liberia. Liberia and Sierra Leone had limited information technology infrastructure necessary for data collection and response (McNamara et al., 2016). At the close of the pandemic, higher education administrators and policy makers realized the necessity to expand information technology in higher education institutions to cope with any unforeseen problems disruptive to education delivery. Information technology departments at the institutions as revealed by this study

improved and upgraded their systems. During the Covid 19 outbreak in 2019, instead of closing public education institutions, digital learning platforms were immediately used to deliver online courses.

Participants agreed that there were initial challenges of internet connectivity, data availability for students and faculty, change resistance to the online system and adjustments to online learning. Participants succinctly noted that computer knowledge was problematic, especially for older faculty who found it difficult to adjust to using computers for instructions and had to attend special courses to catch up with the technology. However, the introduction of online learning platforms in public higher institutions of learning in Liberia and Sierra Leone provided opportunities for a blended learning system after the pandemics. The lesson learned for current application is the necessity for modern information technology to enhance teaching and learning, access to other digital platforms for research, and the minimization of costs associated with transportation, overcrowded campuses, and interruptions. Additionally, students and faculty can access course materials at their convenience, making it easier for working students to benefit from learning. Digitization also increased research opportunities for faculty who have been integrated into new processes for teaching and learning. Participants in this study shared the view that computers are inevitable and concur that computers are the reality now and in the future. They believed it was good that they did not miss this opportunity for online learning because experience has taught that people cannot thrive in the future without computers. Consequently, there are concerted requirements to ensure   all new pupils are computer literate. Digitization reduced major student groups on campuses and improved administrators' capacity to plan, handle, and organize academic activities. It also contributed to a decrease in student unrest.

Experience taught us that without computers, you cannot survive in the future. Now we are making computer literacy compulsory for all freshmen students. Digitization also helped reduce student unrest because it minimized large gatherings of students on campuses and increased administrators' abilities to plan, organize, and coordinate academic activities.

Experimentation with free education policies in Liberia and Sierra Leone

The free education policy instituted by the Liberian Government for students of public higher education institutions has a dual effect on educational governance. The policy eliminated financial burdens from students and placed them on administrators who relied on tuition fees to operate the institutions. The removal of tuition fees for undergraduates increases the need for more funding for operations resulting in poor quality education. Poverty is a major reason most Liberians do not acquire tertiary education and persons from poor households are likely to drop out of school (HIES, 2014). Fees paid by the Government based on the number of registered students for an academic semester are usually not on time and inadequate, which makes planning and projections for innovative programs and facilities unrealistic. Moreover, free education also negates the university's ability to implement programs of promotions and tenure leading to faculty strikes and boycotting classes. Strikes by faculty of the William V. S. Tubman University in February 2022 led to the resignation of the University's President. The University of Liberia's faculty went on strike in October and December of 2021 and June 2022 over poor wages, poor facilities and poor working conditions. In 2021, academic staff members of three public universities in Sierra Leone, the University of Sierra Leone, Njala University, and the Ernest Bai Koromah University staged strike actions in demand of 100% salary increase and better working conditions (Jalloh, 2021).

The Tuition Free Policy for undergraduates, intended to increase access to higher education, retention, and completion rates, is flawed, and demotivates students to study because it is not

performance-based (PC3). It also affects the output of quality of education since most students entering public higher education systems lack academic preparedness at the lower levels of education (Ministry of Education, 2017). Strategies to upgrade higher education indicate a mismatch between funding and implementation (Higher Education Sector Report, 2017). Higher education administrators need to understand the dichotomy between public policy pronouncements and implementation, and develop strategies to balance the two. Before a policy on free education is to be implemented, the government must look at what is required to fully fund the administrative functions of the university and provide the basic services necessary for operations.

Policy makers in Sierra Leone recognized this necessity and increased budgetary allotment for education to 25 % of the annual budget. Budgetary support to the educational sector in Liberia is 14% (National Budget of Liberia, 2022). However, most of the money allocated to education goes to fund primary and secondary education. Barely four years after the pronouncement of free education policy for public higher education institutions in Liberia and the discussions are underway for the passage into Law of a Weah Education Fund Bill, intended to provide access and opportunity to pursue higher education at public tertiary education institutions tuition-free. Administrators of these institutions are faced with inadequate funds to match high enrollment, construct facilities, and develop new programs.

The lack of fixed criteria for beneficiaries demotivates students from excelling academically, since students on probation and high academic performers are equally benefited. The Sierra Leonean case is different because free education is targeted to primary and secondary students where the intent is to prepare them ready for tertiary education. The result is that students in Sierra Leone are better prepared to enter tertiary education than students in Liberia. The situation is changing since the introduction of West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Exams,

WASSCE which is a standardized test for West African schools for admission into intuitions of higher learning in West Africa.

The Challenge of Unqualified Faculty and Quality Assurance

Shortages of instructional staff in public institutions of learning in Liberia and Sierra Leone after the civil wars led many unqualified personnel to assume roles, they were unqualified for. Bachelor level staffers, employed as teaching assistants, were sometimes forced by the circumstances to teach classes and administer exams without any direct supervision. Where faculties were academically qualified and had content knowledge in their specific disciplines, they lacked pedagogical knowledge to teach. Quality assurance in Higher education is a new development with most systems instituted after the war years. Only 21 higher education institutions in Africa had quality assurance units in 2012 (Shabana et al, 2014). The University of Sierra Leone is assisting the University of Liberia to establish a quality assurance unit as part of the framework for collaboration agreed upon in September 2021.

The establishment of quality assurance units requires funding. Quality assurance units are necessary to monitor teaching and learning outcomes, research, transparency and accountability in public higher education administration. Public higher education administrators can benefit from improving teaching and learning by harmonizing quality assurance across the sub-region. Technological development in education delivery requires new methodology to teach students to learn with new breed of instructors to work with them. To bridge the quality gaps, post- conflict administrators in Liberia and Sierra Leone are emphasizing faculty development across the disciplines with a slant towards science, technology engineering, and mathematics, (STEM). In Liberia and Sierra Leone, quality assurance mechanisms are being established to manage education quality related issues to minimize malpractices.

In Sierra Leone public higher education institutions, quality assurance units are established and functioning unlike Liberia where these units have not been instituted. The quality of public higher education is intrinsically linked to upgrading teaching and learning methods, research, availability of essential services and improved education environment. Liberia tackled this challenging situation by developing institutional partnerships with relevant institutions which are helpful due to cheaper in costs than Europe and America.

The Challenge of Reordering of Priorities

Priorities of public higher education institutions need to be reordered and aligned to national development goals. Traditional education systems emphasizing the humanities must be assessed within the context of recent conflict. Findings from the studies indicate that civic conflicts change normal situations, and academic governance must adopt new measures to address challenges brought about by conflicts. Challenges in higher education governance are intrinsically linked to national development agendas, which must be aligned if public universities are to develop the workforce needs of the nation.

From the findings, numerous conditions that existed had to be treated on their own merits. The results of the study are relevant for current and future administrators who must deal with conflict-related issues of poor financing, exponential student enrollment, damaged infrastructure, inadequate quality of faculty and staff, limited research opportunities and inadequate programs for quality assurance. The inability to determine the quality of teaching and learning, infrastructural development, and new programs posed problems for the determination of the quality education delivery.

The free education policies, though implemented differently in Liberia and Sierra Leone, present opportunities to alleviate problems of access and poverty; but requires strategic planning.

While the intend may be good, free education is not plausible without corresponding action to for the provision of teaching and learning materials, infrastructure, and staff and faculty development. Solutions to challenges in higher education administration must be tailored to meet corresponding national development needs for human capital. Academic programs, research and policy should inform essential components of development goals.

Recommendations for future research

The findings of this study offer several suggestions for future research. The study examined how conflicts influenced educational governance and quality education delivery by the challenges encountered. Several suggestions were proposed which form the basis for recommendations for future research. The first recommendation for future research is the war related mental health issues affecting faculty, students, staff, and their impact on higher education administration. Though there are several reasons for faculty and student unrests at public universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone, most of these have turned violent leading to destruction of facilities and properties. Teferra & Altbach, (2004) and Fomunyam & Rahming, (2017), attributed causes to social, economic, political, and personal injustice. The findings show however that unrest in post-conflict societies could emanate from other circumstances such as post -traumatic stress disorder and transgenerational traumatic stress disorder. The findings show an intricate link between student- faculty unrests as approaches to problem solving and mental health, particularly post-traumatic stress disorder. Students and faculty experienced wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone as observers, victims, or combatants. According to Castro-Vale et al (2019) people exposed to traumatic conditions can manifest post-traumatic stress disorders more than forty years after exposure. Intergenerational transmission of post-traumatic stress disorder can be passed from parents to children, long years after war related experiences. These disorders present in anxiety

and aggression in young people who are currently enrolled in colleges and universities but did not experience the war fully. Even though civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone occurred fourteen years ago, issues of faculty and student unrests are still prevalent in the public higher education institutions under study. The magnitude to which these unrests and violent behavior can possibly be attributed to the mental health, brought about by civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone, has not been fully examined. But Liberia and Sierra Leone developed mental health policies to provide mental health care at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. This further accentuates the need for further study on conflicts, mental health, and faculties- students' unrests and strikes in public universities. In Liberia and Sierra Leone there is one health facility nationally which caters to mental health patients and are inadequate to meet the countries' needs. Yet violence, trauma, domestic violence, unemployment, and social conditions create mental health cases which are not readily apparent. Mental health policies of Liberia and Sierra Leone revealed that services are weak with new policies framed contextually by post conflict challenges. Though mental health might not be the only reason for violent protests in war-affected countries, future studies could inform academic discourse.

The significance of this study for future research is the administrative challenges caused by the effects of war exhibited through unrests, strikes, upheavals, transgenerational traumatic stress disorders and violence at public higher education institutions of learning have ramifications for administrators who administer such institutions after violent conflicts. Research on mental health disorders, causes, treatment and cure, how they affect faculty and students and their relations to faculty student unrests could have implication for education policy makers public health officials, educational planners, and administrators. Further studies could support this proposition

on the link of violent civil conflicts to administrative challenges in public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Challenges of Linking Strategies to Leadership

This study examined the challenges experienced by public higher education administrators in post-conflict countries. The research showed that when administrators had a personal relationship with the Visitor or Chancellor it was easier to solicit their assistance in resolving conflicts. However, all administrators should have the leadership skills necessary to deal with complex situations, such as relationships between leaders, followers, and the situation (Wren, 1995). All administrators should know how to lead in any situation and change strategies depending on the situation. This includes how leaders respond to conflict situations and the challenges they offer. Future research should also consider linking leadership strategies to challenges. Though this study looked at specific challenges administrators faced in conflict situations and the different strategies used to alleviate them, there is a clear-cut relationship between the challenges, mitigation efforts and leadership styles. Participants noted various strategies and leadership styles but were not specific about what worked best for any given situation. Dynamics such as transformational, situational, and mixed leadership styles were cited by participants as measures in dealing with administrative challenges. Future research could consider delving into the relationships between conflicts and leadership styles of administrators of public higher education institutions during conflicts. Participants indicated that they were not prepared for the challenges encountered, though two-thirds of the participants had attained the academic qualification for leadership. However, leadership in the administration of public higher education institutions is not determined by educational attainment acquired and professional papers published. Achieving a terminal degree in any discipline could be a prerequisite for

becoming an administrator, but sometimes academics make poorer leaders. It is challenging to develop academics into stronger leaders since they are better researchers. In instances where academicians can lead, they might not have the right political connections to administer the institutions free of political interference or cannot garner the political will to function effectively. This implies that educational governance is closely tied to the political connections of administrators in public higher education.

Leadership development programs for high-level academic staff could improve the administrative skills of academics and prepare them for leadership roles, especially after violent civil conflicts, when the shortage of qualified staff is acute. The introduction of new technologies could also encourage public higher learning institutions to engage in industry. More research work could be conducted on the administrative effectiveness of public higher education administrators in post-conflict situations based on their relationship to national leadership, especially since Presidents of Liberia and Sierra Leone served as Visitor and Chancellors of all their public institutions of higher learning.

Aligning African Public Higher Education Institutions and National Development Agenda

The world's economy is changing and becoming more technology base. With technology comes the necessity for knowledge. Higher education institutions are avenues for ensuring countries attain socio- economic and political development. The study suggests the extent to which tertiary academic programs are synchronized with development agendas of a country emerging from civil wars is another issue for further research. Most countries emerging from civil wars find themselves in situations where years of inactive development create gaps which need to be filled since technological advances continue worldwide while development lagged during the period of

wars. There is an overarching demand on national leaders to demand more public higher education institutions to produce qualified and capable workforce to accelerate national development agendas. However, from the findings of this study, there is a disconnect between national policies and expectations of public higher education institutions which are not consulted or involved in policy making. Post-conflict reconstruction requires different approaches. Though participants were not specific on the strategies used to meet the core objectives of these public institutions to provide labor needs of the country, key concepts suggest that public higher educational institutions in post conflict situations can contribute significantly to national development through the programs introduced. The methods adopted by these institutions to ensure the academic programs are aligned with national development needs of their respective countries provide future researchers with a basis for more studies to be conducted in other post -conflict societies.

International collaboration Public Higher Education

The recommendations are made based on the findings of this study for the future concentration of collaborative academic efforts by public higher education institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Liberia and Sierra Leone share common boundaries and are linked linguistically, culturally, economically, historically, and socially. Concurrent civil wars in these two countries and the need for economic recovery and development have encouraged administrators of public Higher education institutions to collaborate in areas of research, faculty and student exchange, curricula harmonization, and institutional development. The intent is to develop human capacity for national development agenda in post conflict reconstruction. The intent is to develop curricula to ensure academic preparedness strategically linked to national development. These nascent agreements designed and signed fifteen years after the respective wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone are to address administrative challenges of brain drain, exponential rise in student enrolment,

underfunding and poor facilities. Further research to examine the utility of intra- institutional collaboration in higher education in Liberia and Sierra Leone is recommended for study since the memorandum of Understanding span a specific period which is renewable.

The internationalization of Higher Education is a new idea propelled by current trends in economic, social, political development and academic constraints. The focus of higher education seems to be shifting from basic activities to internationalization endorsed by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO), the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and United Nations as a strategy to develop a common framework for operationalization of higher education to address problems of distance, where qualification and research are required Vaira, (2004), & de Witt & Altbach (2021). The massification of students on university campuses without adequate facilities, poor finances and digitization are key areas of concentration since knowledge generation and transfer has assumed new roles in economic development. In Sierra Leone 25 thousand   students passed the West African Senior Secondary Schools Certificate Exams, WASSCE in 2021 and sought placements in higher institutions of learning. The situation in Liberia is similar with over ten thousand students seeking admission to the University of Liberia. (University of Liberia website, 2022). Though internationalization of higher education remains a Western concept, African universities are propelled to internationalize to fit the global knowledge economy characterized by science-based education, technology and research (de Witt & Altbach, 2021). The effect of the internationalization of public higher education institutions of Liberia and Sierra Leone provides opportunities for studies on policy formulation, trends, challenges, and quality education delivery across geographic borders. Internationalization or cross border public higher education delivery in post-conflict societies provides strategies to mitigate challenges raised in the research problem of this study.

Implication of Tuition Free Policy on Higher Education Administration

Public Universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone, being focus of this study, are experiencing aftereffects of the free education policies declared by the governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Tuition free policy in Liberia applies to over thirty thousand undergraduates in eleven public higher education institutions while Sierra Leone Free Quality School Education Initiative applies to over two million students in Government approved basic and secondary schools. The objectives of both policies are the provision of inclusive equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all as contained in goal four of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (University of Liberia, (2018) and Kamara, (2020). By these policies, the governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone committed to pay tuition fees and provide requirements for quality education delivery. Our findings from this study revealed that tuition fees for tertiary education in Liberia and Sierra Leone were the lowest in West Africa with students at the University of Liberia paying four United States dollars per credit hour and the University of Sierra Leone students paying the equivalent of one hundred United States dollars per semester which the governments based their subventions on. Again, findings from this study showed governments' subventions were inadequate and payments late. Cardinal effects of the free education policy on higher education are increased enrollment, demand for more and better educational facilities, development of new academic programs and increase technological advancement. The implementation of free education policies in both Liberia and Sierra Leone are marred with various challenges including unqualified instructional staff, lack of infrastructures and equipment, and materials for teaching and learning which inhibits quality education delivery at the tertiary level.

The extent to which governments can fund the operations of public higher institutions of learning using free tuition schemes, to deliver quality higher education in a conducive learning

environment, has not been explored. This study provides avenues for additional research to examine the impact of free tuition policies on the administration of public higher institutions of learning in Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively. Future research which would incorporate the interpretations of the findings of this study will be useful in providing deeper insights on the effectiveness free tuition policies on effective higher educational governance in post- conflict situations, like Liberia and Sierra Leone. Further interest would be studies on the quality of students and their abilities to   perform congruent minimal quality standards without an acceptable merit-based   system for free tuition for all. Such a study would be significant to further address and elucidate policy approaches to educational governance and direct government interference.

Conclusion

This study focused on inherent interest in the delivery of quality higher education in Liberia and Sierra Leone especially after 12 years of violent civil conflict. The study found that despite damaged and dilapidated infrastructures, brain drains and inadequate financing, high enrollment and the development of recent programs, administrators at public higher education institutions must deal with violent eruption of classes, and demand for better working conditions.

The literature review on this study discovered very scanty information on the impact of the Liberia and Sierra Leonean wars on the administration of public higher education. Based on the research findings it could be concluded that the study addressed the challenges in the administration of public higher education institutions in post -conflict societies with the West African Countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Public universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone were selected for this because they are neighboring countries that experienced over ten years of civil wars 1990-2003. The conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone are similar in context and characteristics. The similarities

of culture, language, ethnicity, demographics. and geographic locations present good units for analysis.

It was discovered that administrative challenges did influence leadership styles and how administrators responded to them. There was no distinct leadership style that characterized how administrators govern public higher education institutions after civil conflicts. The administrators and policy makers responded to situations by employing leadership qualities they deemed best suited to solve the problems they encountered without dwelling on a particular type of leadership.

Findings from the study revealed psychological effects of the civil conflict are evidenced by violent behavior, lack of retention, inattentiveness, transgenerational stress disorders and trauma lingers long after the wars. Unfortunately, it can be concluded that the public higher institutions of learning provide basic academic and career counselling, limited psycho-social counselling, and referrals to handle mental health problems.

The study adds value and practical knowledge to research because it provides information on how civil conflicts impact public higher education governance and recommended ways on how these challenges can be alleviated. There is evidence-based information on administrative challenges of public higher education institutions from real life opinions and perspectives of people who experienced them. The significance of the study is that it examined the extent to which internal conflicts in countries affect the administration of public higher institutions of learning, already burdened with numerous administrative, political and economic problems. The study highlights gaps and recommends areas for future research.

Important discoveries from the research study related to the research aims and questions revealed the impacts of civil wars on the administration of public higher education institutions in the twin countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone which simultaneously delayed societal development

and occasioned the collapse social structures. Reconstruction is laborious, tedious and time consuming. The effects of wars cut across all social facets including higher education which is not given the requisite relevance in reconstruction processes. Civil wars in African countries increased in the last twenty years from 2000 and 2020. In West Africa, there have been violent civil conflicts in twelve of the sixteen countries with the longest, most brutally fought in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Though the civil conflict ended over twenty years ago, the impact is felt in higher education institutions which cater to the youthful population of these countries with 60 % below age 35years. These lingering effects of these conflicts affect higher education and subsequently national development. In summary, the study shows that there is a direct correlation between higher education administrative challenges and post conflict situations. This study is a stimulus for further study on how conflicts influence administration, leadership approaches, policy formulation, implementation, and quality education delivery of Public Higher Education Institutions in post conflict societies.

Limitations

This study had two limitations. Firstly, it was limited to four public higher education institutions in two countries that existed before the civil wars and continued to exist after. It did not take into consideration the experiences of administrators and policymakers in other private or faith-based institutions, which were also affected by the civil wars. The experiences of administrators in these institutions could have added other perspectives to the study. Secondly, it considered the experiences of administrators and policy makers and not faculty, staff, and students whose experiences would broaden the context and provided further insights into the phenomenon under study. This was largely because the study was about the governance of public higher education institutions, and the topmost ranking administrators, policy, and decision-makers were

considered as participants best suited for the study. Thirdly, the impact of the Ebola and COVID 19 crises in Liberia and Sierra Leone exacerbated problems in higher education administrations. This study focused on responses from twenty participants purposively selected to address the research questions and objectives based on their subjective experiences. Limiting the study to only four public higher education institutions while others existed, was because these institutions were in two separate countries, and the scope of the study limited it to research interests.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: REAF DS

UNICAF UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM

DOCTORAL STUDIES

The Research Ethics Application Form (REAF) should be completed by:

- Bachelor's students undertaking undergraduate final year projects requiring relevant ethics review and consideration.

- Master's students in academic programmes with research-based dissertation / project modules.

- Doctoral level candidates who are embarking on the first of their Dissertation stages.

- Faculty researchers who are either full time members of Unicaf University staff or part time members of staff.

Important Notes:

- For **students** at all levels, an electronic version of the completed form should be uploaded to the relevant submission link in the VLE. Your supervisor will then review this and provide feedback commentary. Once their initial approval is given then the supervisor will forward this on, for final approval by the Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). Se Appendix I and II for guidance.
- Faculty members should submit their applications directly to the UREC secretary.
- Please type your application and **do not** submit paper copy scans. Only *PDF of Word* format documents should be submitted to the committee.

- If you need to supply any supplementary material, not specifically requested by the application form, please do so in a separate file. Any additional document(s) should be clearly labelled and uploaded in the relevant VLE link.
- If you have any queries about the form, please address them to your dissertation or project supervisor.

> **X Before submitting your application, please tick this box to confirm that all relevant Sections have been filled in and that the information contained is accurate to the best of Your knowledge.**

UNICAF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION FORM	UREC USE ONLY: Application No: Date Received:

Student's Name:

Weade Kobbah-Boley

E-mail Address:

wkobbah@yahoo.com

Student ID #:

A171D3981014

Partner University:

Unicaf Malawi

Program of Study:

Doctorate of Education

1. **Title of Proposed Research Project:**

   Challenges in Administration Public of Higher Education Institutions in Post-Conflict Societies in the 21st Century: A case study of Liberia and Sierra Leone

2. **Please indicate the category of the proposed Research Project:**

   (a) UU Faculty research project ☐

   (b) UU Doctoral Student dissertation research **x**

   ☐

   (c) UU Master's Student dissertation / research project ☐

   (d) UU Bachelor's Student final year research project ☐

   (e) Other, please specify: ☐

3.   **Proposed Research Project Investigator(s):**

a) **Please fill in below the details of the Principal Investigator(s) as per 2(a).**
   In the case of student projects (categories 2.b, 2.c and 2.d) fill in the details of the Faculty supervising the project (supervisor).
   Please fill in the details of the:

Principal Investigator	
Title:	
First Name:	
Last Name:	
Position:	
School/Department	
Telephone:	
Email address:	

Principal Investigator	
Title:	
First Name:	
Last Name:	
Position:	
School/Department	
Telephone:	
Email address:	

b) **Details of co-investigators (category 2.a) or co-supervisors (categories 2.b, 2.c and 2.d) if applicable:**

Co-Investigator	
Title:	
First Name:	
Last Name:	
Position:	
Organisation:	
Telephone:	
Email address:	

Co-Investigator	
Title:	
First Name:	
Last Name:	
Position:	
Organisation:	
Telephone:	
Email address:	

c) **In the case of student projects (categories 2.b, 2.c and 2.d), please provide details of the student**

Student			
Fist Name::	Weade	Student ID:	A171D3981014
Last Name:	Kobbah-Boley	Email	wkobbah@yahoo.com
Programme of	Education		
Level of study:	Doctorate		
Supervisor:	Dr. Regina Kaume-Mwinzi		
Co-Supervisor:			

4. **Please state the timelines involved in the proposed research project:**

Estimated Start Date: January 2019

Estimated End Date: November 2019

5. **External Research Funding (if applicable):**

(a) Please list any external (third party) sources of funding you plan to utilise for your project. You need to include full details on the source of funds (e.g. state, private or individual sponsor), any prior / existing or future relationships between the funding body / sponsor and any of the principal investigator(s) or co-investigator(s) or student researcher(s), status and timeline of the application and any conditions attached.

There is no external or second party funding sources for this project. Currently, the researcher is the individual sponsor for this project. However, grants are being sought to augment the meagre resources available.

(b) If there are any perceived ethical issues or potential conflicts of interest arising from applying for and receiving external funding for the proposed research then these need to be fully disclosed below and also further elaborated on, in the relevant sections on ethical considerations later on in this form.

There are no perceived ethical issues or potential conflicts of interest arising from the application or receipt of external funding for the proposed research.

6. Summary of Project:

In this section please fully describe the purpose and underlying rationale for the proposed research project. Ensure that you pose the research questions to be examined, state the hypotheses, and discuss the expected results of your research and their potential.

It is important in your description / discussion to use plain language so it can be understood by all members of the UREC, especially those who are not necessarily experts in the particular discipline. To that effect please ensure that you fully explain / define any technical terms or discipline-specific terminology.

This research project is undertaken to write a dissertation in partial fulfilment for a doctoral degree in education. The aim of the project is to conduct a study on challenges faced by administrators in administering public higher education institutions in post conflict situations. The research questions examined are :

What are the challenges in administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

How do administrators respond to the challenges in administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

What are the impacts of the challenges in administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

Which mitigation strategies are possible for the challenges in administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone?

In conflict situations, various interventions are employed to address educational deficits in primary and secondary schools with little attention paid to tertiary institutions which are to absorb these students and prepare them for national development.   The expected result of the research will be the discovery of new body of information, knowledge, and strategies necessary for the effective administration of HEI's in post-conflict situations which will guide other HEI's in similar circumstances in Africa and elsewhere.

7. Project execution:

Please give a description of the research method(s) that will be used:

This is a qualitative research study which will use case study and observation as research designs. The interview schedules and observation schedules will be used respectively as research instruments. The interview questions will be open-ended to allow the interviewees to provide in-depth responses to the questions. These methods are relevant for the study because they will explore real life situation or events which cannot be experimented with. Semi- structured questions will be used to guide the interviews which will be recorded with the interviewee's permission though questions will not be restricted to the scripted semi -structured questions. The key issues guiding this research project are the challenges faced by higher education administrators in public tertiary institutions, how they respond to them and what new body of knowledge can be found from the study which will guide other administrators in similar situations. Public tertiary institutions in Liberia and Sierra Leone were selected because they are located in two neighbouring countries in West Africa which experienced civil wars, massive displacement of populations and infrastructural destruction. Liberia and Sierra Leone have similar cultures, languages, and peoples. The tertiary institutions under study existed before and after the wars and therefore present opportunities to explore how these civil wars affected the administration of higher education and how these problems were responded to.

Responses to the interviews will be transcribed, organized into themes, analysed and interpreted. Findings will be presented in a narrative form.

8. Does the Project involve the recruitment and participation of additional persons other than the researchers themselves?

Note: The definition of "participation" includes both:
(i)   Active participation, such as when participants knowingly take part in an interview or complete a questionnaire
(ii)   YES

(i)   If you have answered "NO" to Question 8 please directly proceed to Section 18.
(ii)   If you have answered "YES" to Question 8 please complete all the following sections.

9. Relevant Details of the Participants of the Proposed Research

Please state the number of participants you plan to recruit, and describe important characteristics such as: demographics (e.g. age, gender, location, affiliation, level of fitness, intellectual ability etc). It is also important that you specify any inclusion and exclusion criteria that will be applied (e.g. eligibility criteria for participants).

The research cuts across 4 public institutions of higher learning with two Liberia and Sierra Leone respectively. The researcher will recruit ten participants/interviewees in each country, totalling 20 persons comprising the following:
 6 Vice Chancellors/Presidents (current and past)
 10 Administrators
 4 Policy makers (Ministers of Education and Chairpersons of the Higher Education
    Commissions)
Since the civil War in Liberia and Sierra Leone there have been several changes in administration. The University of Liberia has had five Presidents while Sierra Leone has had The research intends to ensure gender balance as much as possible since the targeted participants have occupied or are currently in administrative positions.
The nature of the research requires that the researcher draws on the direct experiences of administrators of the selected institutions and policy makers who decisions impact them. Six Vice Chancellors/Presidents are selected for the four institutions under study because of the turnover of persons in those positions and the experiences each had based on the proximity of their tenure to the conflict. Most of these institutions have had changes in administration which makes it possible to talk to six past and present Vice Chancellors.

10. Recruitment Process for Human Research Participants:

(i) Please clearly describe how the potential participants will be identified, approached and recruited.

(ii) State any relationship between the principal investigator(s), co-investigators(s), student investigator(s) and participant(s). For example if you are conducting research in a school environment on students in your classroom (e.g. instructor-student).

(iii) If any poster(s), advertisement(s) or letter(s) are to be used for participant recruitment, then please provide a copy of that.

> This qualitative study will utilize purposive sampling technique because the participants share common characteristics or a set of characteristics. The purposive sampling technique will also be selected because the researcher will be judgemental to select the participants who can provide answers to the research questions. Potential participants will be identified by their past and current positions. They will be purposely selected and identified from the list of administrators of the institutions, heads of the Higher Institution commissions and education ministers based on information from direct sources. The research will be conducted in the Universities under investigation with informants/participants into categories as specified. One of the public universities identified for study is the University of Liberia, where the researcher works currently as an administrator. The researcher intends to interview among others, the current President of the University of Liberia, who the researcher's boss. Hence the relationship will be one of employer-employee. However, this relationship will have no direct bearing on the responses to the research interview and will not prejudice it in any way. The researcher also intends to interview immediate past and current Vice Chancellors/Presidents of the two public Universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone.
> The researcher's direct experience of working as an administrator can inform the research but will not influence the results since all information to be utilized in the study will be obtained from direct sources, interviews and available data.
> The participants will be recruited by telephone calls and emails.

11. Informed Consent of Research Participants:

a) Describe in detail the process that the investigator(s) will be using to obtain valid informed consent from study participants.
If the participants are minors or for other reasons are not competent to give written consent, describe the proposed alternate source of seeking consent, including any permission / information letter to be provided to the person(s) providing the consent on their behalf (e.g. parent or guardian).
Also, in such a case please discuss how you plan to obtain verbal assent from the actual study participants, and if this is not warranted please explain why.

Participants in the research will be adequately informed of the nature of the study prior to their participation and their consent obtained. When the verbal consent is obtained, the researcher will request that an informed consent form be signed. This is to meet ethical standards for the conduct of research. The researcher will not require verbal consent as the target population is literate.

(b) You need to provide a copy of these important additional documents:

1. **Informed Consent Form / Certificate of Consent for Research Participants**
2. **The content of any telephone script (if applicable).**
3. **Any other material that will be used in the consent process.**

(c) Will the participants be deceived in any way about the true purpose of the study?

YES ☐ NO X

(d) If you answered "YES" to the above, please describe the nature and extent of the deception involved. Explain how and when the deception will be revealed, and who will administer this debrief to the participants.

Non Applicable

12. **Details of Participant Debrief and Further Information:**

Please explain and further elaborate on what information will be provided to the participants after participation in the research.
For example, will you be providing a more complete description of the purpose of the research (over and above the information provided in the informed consent form and in the debriefing form, or provide information of future access to the results of the research).

Participants in the research will be communicated to about the research, its objectives, requirement of participants, right to consent and the need to sign an informed consent form, the right to withdraw from the research without reprisals, rights to revise answers if deemed necessary and access to unpublished copies of their interviews and final copies of the research work.

13. Ensuring the Participants' Right to Withdraw:

a) Describe how the participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the project.

> From the onset when request for participation is made, each participant will be informed of the right to withdraw before, during and after the research. This will be done verbally and by writing. The informed consent form which each participant is required to sign details the right to withdrawal.

b) Explain any consequences for the participant from withdrawing from the study and indicate what will happen to the data of participants who chose to withdraw.

> There are no consequences for the participant for anyone who withdraws from the study. The research will not use information gotten from any participant who withdraws and not attribute any data to such participant.

c) Describe how the participant will be informed of their right to access their data.

Participants will be informed of their rights to access their data in the initial telephone request, confirm by a formal letter of request and by information contained in the informed consent form.

14. Details of Proposed Compensation Given to Participants (if applicable):

Will participants receive compensation for participation?

(i) Monetary	**YES** ☐ **NO X**
(ii) Non-Monetary	**YES** ☐ **NO X**
No compensation	**YES**

(a) If you answered "**YES"** to **either** (i) or (ii) above, please provide details below:

(b) In the case of participants who exercise their right to withdraw, prior to completion of the proposed study, and you answered "YES" to either (i) or (ii) above, will they still be entitled to compensation and on what terms (e.g. full / partial or no compensation given)?

Confidentiality of the Participants' Data:

Non Applicable

          YES X   **NO ☐**

          YES X   **NO ☐**

Note: Participants' identity/data will be considered confidential if an assigned ID code or number is used, but it will not be anonymous. Anonymous data are defined as those which cannot be in any way traced back to an individual participant.

(a) Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of the collected data both during the conduct of the research and in the subsequent release of its findings.

The Researcher will safeguard the anonymity of the participant by ensuring that nothing published in print, during seminars, conferences or lectures will be traceable to the participant or identify them in any way. Data will be collected solely by the researcher and will not contain any more identifiers than necessary for the research. Access to the data will be solely the researcher's responsibility because the information collected will be stored on adobe format software installed on a computer with a biometric password. The information will also be backed up and store in the secured computer and backed up in the cloud which is also inaccessible without the requisite password. Data will be stored for a minimum of five years. The informed consent form clearly states that the information will be treated with strict confidence.

(b) If participants' anonymity or confidentiality is not appropriate for this proposed research project, please explain why, providing details of how all participants will be informed of the fact that any data which they will provide will not be anonymous or confidential.

Non applicable.

15. Storage, Access and Disposal of Collected Research Dat
Please describe in detail (see appendixes 1):

(i) How the collected research data will be stored,
(ii) What type of data will you be storing,
(iii) Where will they be stored.
 (iv) For what period of time,
 (v) What are the measures that will be put in place to ensure the security of the data,
 (vi) Who will have access to the data, and

(vii) The method and timeline for the disposal of the data.

Data from interviews and collected electronically will be transferred to a personal computer using the adobe format software for audio/sound. The data will be properly labelled. The computer has a biometric password which limits access to any unauthorized person. The length of time to store collected data varies from one institution to the next. Some institutions require a minimum of ten years. Since the researcher has no information regarding Unicaf's policy on data storage, the researcher proposes to store the data for a period of five years but remains amendable to any policy requirements. Once the dissertation is approved all data will be stored in the clouds for easy retrieval and security. During this period, except as otherwise required, the researcher will be the sole person to access the data which will be stored in the clouds.

16. **Are there any other approvals required (in addition to ethics clearance from UREC) in order**
to carry out the proposed research study?
For example do you need any kind of institutional permission (e.g. school principal or company director) or approval from a local ethics or professional regulatory body?

☐   YES   ☐   NO   X   NOT APPLICABLE

If you answered "YES" to the above then please provide the essential details below.

17. **Significance of the Proposed Research Study and Potential Benefits:**

Outline the potential significance and/or benefits of the research.

The West African Countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone are neighbours who have similar cultures, languages and interrelated populations. These countries experienced violent civil wars which devastated infrastructures and economies, caused massive external and internal displacement of populations and affected the educational systems.

Numerous documentations have been written on challenges of higher education in Africa. However, very little, if any, have dealt specifically with challenges occasioned by violent civil conflicts and how Higher Education Institutions cope in the aftermath of these conflicts and strategies to administer and deliver quality education.

The study is significant because it is expected that it will discover new knowledge which can assist administrators of war affected tertiary institutions to understand the complexity of problems brought about by civil wars and how to mitigate them. The beneficiaries of this study include but not limited to university fraternity, which include university chancellors, vice chancellors, administrators and other policy makers, in the world countries which were previously war-torn. It will also provide avenues for further research since this study will be restricted to challenges in administration in public higher education institutions only.

18. Potential Risks of the Proposed Research Study:

(a) Outline any potential **Individual** risks associated with the conduct of the research. This may include potential harm coming to research staff, research participants, other individuals not directly involved in the research. Please also state the measures that will be taken to minimise any such risks and the procedures to be adopted in the event of any misadventure.
Please refer and complete the Risk Assessment Form for Ethics Application

(Appendix III) and submit it along with the current document.

There is low risk to the researcher and participants associated with this research project. Normal travel risk is minimal as locations for the research are accessible by air and roads. The focus of the research is challenges in administration which do not require any experimentation or issues that will cause psychological stress or trauma. Participants will be fully informed of the nature of the research and can opt to participate or not.

Outline any potential **Environmental** or **Societal** risks that may arise from the proposed research.

If you perceive any such risks it is important that you state what measures will be taken to

minimise these, as well as the procedures to be adopted in the event of any misadventure.

There are no perceived environmental of societal risks associated with this research project as it is purely a social research project and does not utilize human subject experimentation or involve the use of chemical, biological substances. The research does not delve into issues which could cause societal problems and is purely a qualitative study dealing with challenges in administration in higher education institutions in post conflict societies.

19. Are there any other ethical issues associated with the proposed research study that are not already adequately covered in the preceding sections?
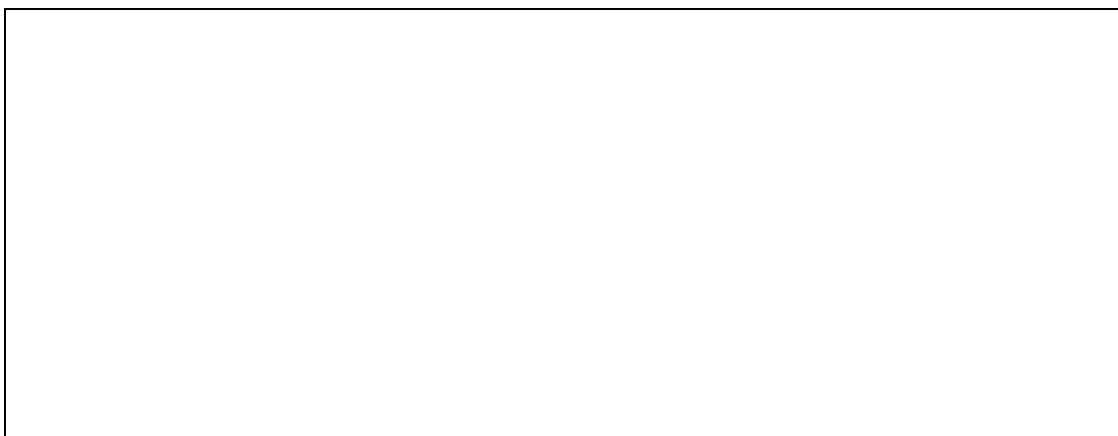
Yes ☐ No X

(a) If you answered "YES" to the above, please specify these below:

21 Application Checklist

Please mark √ if the study involves any of the following (for additional information, see Appendix III):

- Children and young people under 18 years of age, vulnerable population such as children with special educational needs (SEN), racial or ethnic minorities, socioeconomically disadvantaged, pregnant women, elderly, malnourished people, and ill people.

- Research that foresees risks and disadvantages that would affect any participant of the study such as anxiety, stress, pain or physical discomfort, harm risk (which is more than is expected from everyday life) or any other act that participants might believe is detrimental to their wellbeing and / or has the potential to / will infringe on their human rights / fundamental rights.

- Risk to the well-being and personal safety of the researcher

- Administration of any substance (food / drink / chemicals / pharmaceuticals / supplements / chemical agent or vaccines or other substances (including vitamins or food substances) to human participants.

- Results that may have an adverse impact on the natural or built environment

  Please check that the following documents are attached to your application.

REAF- VERSION 3.0

	ATTACHED	NOT APPLICABLE
Recruitment advertisement	☐	X
Informed Consent Form / Certificate of Consent for Research Participants (Appendix IV)	X	☐
Questionnaire	☐	X
Interview Schedule	X	☐
Debriefing Form Template (Appendix V)	X	☐
The content of any telephone script (if applicable)	☐	
Risk Assessment Form for Ethics Application (Appendix I)	X	☐

| Gatekeeper Letter Template (Appendix VI) | X | ☐ |

Any other approvals required in order to carry out the proposed research study, e.g., institutional permission (e.g. school principal or company director) or approval from a local ethics or professional regulatory body. ☐ ☐

22. Final Declaration by Applicants:

(a) I declare that this application is submitted on the basis that the information it contains is confidential and will only be used by Unicaf University and Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) for the explicit purpose of ethical review and monitoring of the conduct of the research proposed project as described in the preceding pages.

(b) I understand that this information will not be used for any other purpose without my prior consent, excluding use intended to satisfy reporting requirements to relevant regulatory bodies.

(c) The information in this form, together with any accompanying information, is complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.

(d) I undertake to abide by the highest possible international ethical standards governing the Code of Practice for Research Involving Human Participants, as published by the UN WHO Research Ethics Review Committee (ERC) on http://www.who.int/ethics/research/en/ and to which Unicaf University aspires to.

(e) In addition to respect any and all relevant professional bodies' codes of conduct and/or ethical guidelines, where applicable, while in pursuit of this research project.

(f) I will report any changes affecting the ethical aspects of the project to the Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). Note: In the case of student projects the responsibility lies with the Faculty Dissertation / Project Supervisor as per 3 (a).

(g) I will report any adverse or unforeseen events which might occur to the relevant Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee (UREC). Note: In the case of student projects the responsibility lies with the Faculty Dissertation/Project Supervisor as per 3 (a)

Print Name of Principal Investigator of the Research Project:

| Weade Kobbah-Boley |

Print Name of Project Supervisor

(in the case of student research projects):

| Dr. Yusuf Sulieman |

| August 2. 2021 |

Date of Application:

Important Note:

Please now save your completed form (we suggest you also print a copy for your records) and then submit it to your UU Dissertation/project supervisor (tutor). **In the case of student projects the responsibility lies with the Faculty Dissertation/Project Supervisor as per 3 (a).** If this is a student application then it should be submitted via the relevant link in the VLE. Please submit only electronically filled in copies; **do not** hand fill and submit scanned paper copies of this application. Faculty members should submit this application electronically to the UREC secretary.

Informed Consent Form / Certificate of Consent for Research Participants

This document consists of two parts: the **Informed Consent Form** (to share information about the research study with you) and the **Certificate of Consent** (for signatures if you choose to participate). You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form.
This Form is for research interventions that cover the following research activities: questionnaires, in-depth interviews, focus groups discussions, elicited conversation, observations, recorded listening, videotaped activities and interviews.
[**NB**: Please use simple language and local and simplified words rather than scientific terms and professional jargon. In your explanation, consider local beliefs and knowledge when deciding how best to provide the information.]

Informed Consent Form for:

> Participants

Researcher's Name:

> Weade Kobbah-Boley

E-mail:

> wkobbah@yahoo.com

Programme of Study:

> Doctorate of Education

Partner University:

> Unicaf University, Malawi

Project / Dissertation Title   Challenges in Administration of Public Higher Education institutions in post-conflict societies: A case study of Liberia and Sierra Leone

Supervisor's name:

> Dr. Yusuf Sulieman

Supervisor's e-mail:

> yusufsuleiman@alkiman@edu.ng

Part 1: Informed Consent Form

1. Introduction

> Briefly state who you are and that you are inviting participant(s) to take part in research which you are doing. Inform them that they can take time to reflect on whether they want to participate or not and that they may talk to anyone they feel comfortable talking with about the research. Assure the participant that if they do not understand some of the words or concepts, that you will take time to explain them as you go along and that they can ask questions at any time during their participation in the research study.

My name is Weade Kobbah-Boley, a doctoral student undertaking research to find out the challenges in administration of public universities in post conflict situations and how these institutions cope with them or how they affect the overall management of the institutions. We will study public universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone, two neighboring West African Countries who experienced civil wars. The results of this study will be published as a dissertation to give   education administrators and other researchers better understanding of how civil wars affect higher institutions of learning and other perspectives of challenges no considered when dealing with higher education. You are being asked to participate in this study because of your involvement with higher institutions of learning in these countries as a policy maker or an administrator. Please take time to decide whether to participate in this study or not. You are also free to discuss this with your family, friends or anybody you feel is necessary to discuss the project with. I will be happy to offer any further explanation required or respond to any questions you might have before, during or after the study. Please not that your participation is purely voluntary and will be done with your expressed consent.REAF- VERS

2. The purpose / aims of the research

Explain the purpose of your research and provide a brief introduction to the research procedures that the study follows and what is expected from the participants. Describe the type of questions that the participants are likely to be asked. Inform participants if the research involves questions or discussion which may be sensitive or potentially cause embarrassment.

The purpose of this research project is to find out specifically how civil conflicts affect the administration of higher institutions of learning and what can be done to address some of these challenges. You will be asked to answer some questions about the institutions before, during and after the conflict. These questions will cover specific areas of the administration of public higher education institutions. Where possible, the interviews will be recorded for easy and correct note-taking. The interviews will be transcribed, analysed and interpreted in accordance with acceptable qualitative research methods practices to form part of the research study.

3. Participation in the Research

Explain what participation in the research study involves. Describe what is required of the participants, the amount of time required to take part in the study and where it will take place. Inform participants that they may choose not to respond to questions they do not want wish to respond to.

*if the research includes participants under the age of 18 informed consent should be obtained by their parents or legal guardians who must be presented with all the information described on this inform consent form before giving parental permission for their children to participate. Please provide all relevant information for parents or legal guardians at the following sections (4-8 below).

I request at least forty (40) minutes of your time to respond to the questions at a time and place convenient to you, preferably your office or somewhere we can talk without disruption. You will be contacted before the interview to arrange a suitable venue and time. Though the study does not intend to probe into any uncomfortable matter, during the interview, you may or may not respond to any question should you find uncomfortable responding to or one you chose not to respond to. You will not be held liable for your failure to participate or your withdrawal from the process before, during or after you have participated in an interview.

4. Participant selection

Explain why and how you have chosen this person to participate in this research.

 You have been chosen to participate in this research study because of your previous or current role in the institution as a policy maker or administrator and as such you are expected to have the required knowledge on the subject under investigation. Your expertise and experience in the subject area can contribute significantly to the research as well.

5. Voluntary participation

> **Provide a statement that participation in the research is entirely voluntary and includes the right to withdraw. Participants have the right to withdraw at any stage of the research without any consequences. They should also have the opportunity to review their remarks at the end of the interview and they may stop participating at any time during discussions/interviews. Participants can request a printed copy of the interview transcripts and request amendments out of the final copy of the transcript.**
>
> Participation in this research project is purely voluntary and you can decide at any point in the interview to discontinue without any effects. You will have opportunities to look over your answers and revise them if need be since written or electronic copies of your interview will be available and I will be happy to provide.

REAF- VERSION 3.0

6. Risks and benefits to participants

Explain and describe any potential risks, harms and benefits to participants. You can extend the benefits of your research to society as a whole.

There is no potential risk to you for participating in the research project. Information obtained from this study will serve as a guide to administrators of higher institutions of learning faced with challenges in administration brought about by civil wars. More importantly it will add to available knowledge on administration of higher education institutions.

We cannot assure you of any personal benefits you might gain form your participation but others could benefit from the findings of this study. Additionally, the study can serve as an eye-opener for other researchers to delve into challenges in other areas of higher education institutions in post-conflict society not covered in this study.

7. Confidentiality

Provide a statement about confidentiality and security of information. Explain that you will not be sharing or giving participant's information to anyone and that this will be kept safe and private. Any information about the participant will have a number on it instead of the participant's name. Only the researcher(s) will know the participant's name, therefore participant's information would not be potentially identifiable, for example, in any published material. Clarify when data will be destroyed.

Any information provided in the study will be confidential. All data collected will be kept by the researcher, transcribed, arranged in thematic areas for easy documentation, analysed, and interpreted. Information contained in the research document will not contain any direct quotations that can be traced to anyone. The researcher will respect and handle all information including personal information with the strictest of confidence and because the project is academic, the document will be subjected to review of the academic supervisor and the Institution Review Board of the Unicaf University.

8. Sharing the results

Provide a brief plan for sharing the findings with the participants and inform them that the research findings might be shared, for example, through publications and conferences.

Findings of the research will be shared with all participants through electronic mail. The final research findings could also be published, shared with libraries or be used for other academic discussions, conferences and seminars.

9. Contact details

Provide the contact details of UREC should participants wish to make a complaint on ethical grounds

Should a participant have any reason to make an ethical complaint, please do so at the following address:
Doctorate of Education
Unicaf University, Malawi
Unit 1, Shoppers Mall, Area 4, Plot 87
Lilongwe, Malawi

Part 2: Certificate of Consent

This section is mandatory and should be signed by the participant(s

I have read the foregoing information about this study, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss about it. I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions and I have received enough information about this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason for withdrawing and without negative consequences. I consent to the use of multimedia (e.g. audio recordings, video recordings) for the purposes of my participation to this study. I understand that my data will remain anonymous and confidential. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print name of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date:

If illiterate:
I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had an opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of witness:

Signature of witness:

Date:

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM FOR ETHICS APPLICATION

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to identify the hazards and associated risks related to the research activities which are carried out for the purpose of research project/dissertations and to describe the control measures/procedures which will be adopted to reduce the level of risk by researchers conducting research. It is important that researchers consider what hazards might arise in the course of their research activities both of their own safety and for their safety of their participants and then consider the measures required to reduce the level of risk posed by these hazards to safeguard health and safety.

Any student or faculty who embarks on a research project/dissertation must complete the Risk Assessment Form in consultation with their academic supervisor before starting their dissertation/research project. The Form should be signed by the student and supervisor or by the faculty member who will conduct research. The Risk Assessment Form should be submitted with REAF for approval from UREC.

The Risk Assessment should be revisited if any changes are made to the proposed research or if any circumstances change.

This document covers the following research activities: questionnaires, interviews (including online questionnaires and interviews), focus groups, elicited conversation, observations, recorded listening, videotaped activities and interviews

2. Definitions

Please read the following definitions while completing this form:

Hazard: The potential of harm

Risk: The probability of that harms occurring within a defined time interval and the severity of its consequences.

Risk Assessment: The process of deciding on actions to be taken to reduce risk to an acceptable level, preferably, "low" or "high" through the implementation of control measures / procedures. Risk Assessment involves consideration of physical and psychological risks along with the protection of privacy. The student / researcher must develop procedures that reduce and minimize any risks to human participants.

Risk Rating: the simplest form of risk assessment is to rate risk as "low" or "high", depending on how likely the activity is to cause harm and how serious that harm might be.

Low Risk: Harm arises under controlled conditions. Low risk activities show that you have correctly identified a hazard, but that in the particular circumstances, the risk is insignificant. No more than minimal risk is greater than what is typically encountered in everyday life.

Low Risk research activities do not involve:

1. Those who are considered vulnerable (persons who are incapable of protecting their own interests):

- Children under 18.
- Persons who have relative or absolute impairments in decisional capacity, education, resources, strength, or other attributes needed to protect their own interests.

- People who are marginalized, stigmatized, or face social exclusion or prejudice that increases the likelihood that others place their interests at risk, whether intentionally or unintentionally.
- Individuals in hierarchical relationships.
- Institutionalized persons.
- Women under specific circumstances: e.g. studies with female or transsexual sex workers; research on sexual and intimate partner violence; studies with trafficked women, refugees and asylum seekers.
- People living with special needs.
- Homeless persons, nomads, refugees or displaced persons.
- People with incurable or stigmatized conditions or diseases.
- People faced with physical frailty, for example, because of age and co-morbidities.
- Individuals who are politically powerless.
- Members of communities unfamiliar with modern medical concepts.

All research with children and young people under 18 covered by this Risk Assessment is carried out in the presence of a parent, legal guardian or a professional with a duty of care in a professional setting with children and/or young people. Parental/legal guardian or care consent should be taken prior to undertaking the research.

2. Significant psychological stress or anxiety, or humiliation (make someone feel ashamed and foolish by injuring their dignity and pride) or cause of more than fleeting harm / negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in the normal life of participants.

3. Discussion of a sensitive or controversial topic in an interview that has potential to cause distress to participants because it delves into personal histories or traumatic experiences and provokes strong feelings in respondents.

4. Involve administration of drugs, placebos or other substances as part of this study.
5. Intervention procedures that are used for diagnosis or treatment.

6. Offer any financial inducement to participate in this study.

7. Serving prisoners or serving young offenders.

8. Deception, coercion or manipulation of behavior.

High Risk: More than minimal risk exists when the possibility of physical or psychological harm or harm related to breach of confidentiality or invasion of privacy is greater than what it typically encountered in everyday life.

N.B.: Unicaf University follows the international guidelines for research with human participants, as prepared by CIOMS (Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences) in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). The document, *International Ethical Guidelines for Health-related Research Involving Humans*, Geneva (2016), indicates how the ethical principles set forth in the Declaration of Helsinki of the World Medical Association could be effectively applied, particularly in low-resource settings: **https://cioms.ch/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/WEB-CIOMS-EthicalGuidelines.pdf**

You are strongly advised to read and consult the above document before completing the Risk Assessment Form.

3. Please describe what you perceive to be possible hazards to yourself or to participants that might arise during your research activities and list in the table below the potential hazards and persons at risk identified.

Name: Weade Kobbah-Boley

Student Number: A171D3981014

E-mail: wkobbah@yahoo.com

Programme of Study: Doctorate of Educaion

Partner University: Unicaf Malawi

Title of Research Project: Challenges in Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Post Conflict Societies in West Africa in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Liberia and Sierra Leone

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Brief Description of research activity (mentions the research design you propose to use, details of all research instruments and procedures to be deployed and attach any relevant documents, such as questionnaires):

This research attempts to explore the challenges in administration of public higher education institutions in post conflict societies using Liberia and Sierra Leone as case studies and look at how the administrators of the public higher education institutions handle these challenges when they face them. This qualitative research will attempt to reveal the impact of these challenges in the administration of these institutions and further attempt to find out what can be done to mitigate the challenges.

Research designs to be used in this investigation will be case study and observation. The research instruments/tools to be used to collect qualitative data will be the interview schedules and the observation schedules. Recorded interviews and observations will be conducted with the representative sample - the twenty (20) informants who are the university chancellors, vice chancellors and administrators from four universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The researcher will inform participants of the research intent, request their participation and ask them to complete consent forms to confirm their voluntary participation in the research project. The interviews will be transcribed and organized into thematic groupings to determine similarity, differences or relationships within the data in order to explain the phenomena under investigation.

 Data collected will be analyzed, interpreted and presented in narrative form to meet the needs of the study and ensure findings are credible and valid. This means anyone using the same research designs, data collection instruments and interpretation methods would be able to draw similar conclusions.

Dates (from/until): January 2021 to –June, 2022

Area/Locations that the research project will take place: The research will take place in four universities in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Specifically, the University of Liberia, Monrovia and the W.V.S.Tubman University in Liberia and the University of Sierra Leone, Freetown and Njala University, Njala, Sierra Leone respectively.

Hazards (e.g. travel risks to location of research project, physical threat or abuse, chemical or biological hazards involved):

1.   There is low travel risks to locations within Liberia and Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone is assessable to Liberia by land and air transport.

2.   Low physical threat

3.   There are no chemical or biological hazard threats involved in this research project.

Who can be harmed (e.g. disabled persons, people who have pre-existing health condition):

1.   There is no potential harm to anyone as a result of this research since it does not include direct physical experimentation with human subjects.

   2.

   3.

How can someone be harmed (e.g. physical injury, psychological harm)?

1.   There is very low risk of physical or psychological harm as a result of this research.

2.

 3.

Consequences (e.g. exposure to risks of everyday life, such as road accidents and infectious illness, psychological harm as a result of violence or of the nature of what is disclosed during the interview):
1. There is the low risk of exposure to consequences of normal life since the research involves travel by road and air during the period of data collection.

2. There is low risk of psychological harm or violence of disclosures during the course of the research.

3.There are no possibilities of violence in any of the locations designated as a result of disclosures

made during the research.

Existing Control Measures (e.g. researcher to be aware of health and safety policies of research locatio
The researcher is fully aware of the localities in which the research will be conducted and will ensure that all policies of health, safety and regulations regarding research in these areas will be strictly adhered to.

The researcher will avoid all areas of potential physical threats, including student protests during the course of the research.

3.

Comments: The topic of this research deals with the aftermaths of civil conflicts and their effect on the administration of public higher education institutions in post-conflict societies. Conflicts in these countries ended over ten years ago though the resultant effects still influence the administration of public higher education institutions. There is a low risk of physical and psychological harm. Although traumatic effects could influence the behavior of administrators, faculty, and students, these do not present any high risk and therefore cannot harm participants and researcher..

Risk Rating (choose one):

1. High

2. Low X

Further possible control measures (e.g. Indicate what precautions you will take to minimize the

identified risks):

 Control measures to minimize any possible physical harm occasioned by student protests, etc will be

to avoid all locations that could result to physical bodily harm.

<table>
<tr><td>

</td></tr>
<tr><td>

Further actions required (e.g. Mention the person responsible, description of hazard, details of

action taken, date completed):

Non-Applicable

</td></tr>
</table>

The signatures below confirm that the hazard, risks and appropriate control measures / procedures outlined above have been read and understood.

We the undersigned have assessed the activity and the associated risks and declare that the risks will be controlled by the methods listed.

Researcher's signature: *Weade Hobbah*

Supervisor's signature: RK

Date: June 11th, 2019

Gatekeeper Letter

Date: February 14, 2019

Duport Rd., Paynesville
Liberia

Dear Sir/Madam

Subject: Request for Participation in a Research study

I am a, doctoral student at the Unicaf University, Malawi. As part of my doctoral degree requirements, I am conducting a study on "Challenges in Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Post-Conflict Societies in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Liberia and Sierra Leone," as partial fulfillment for an EdD. I am writing to enquire whether you would be interested in participating in this research as an informant/interviewee.

Subject to approval by Unicaf Research Ethics Committee (UREC) this study will be using case studies and observation as research designs.

Higher education Institutions are some of the first victims of war. The aim of the project is to identify the challenges in the administration of public higher education institutions in post conflict societies and how these challenges were responded to in the quest to deliver quality higher education during and after the wars. It is expected that the findings from this study will add to the body of knowledge and guide administrators in similar situations. The Research Project is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Regina Kaume-Mwinzi of the Faculty of Education, UNICAF University, Malawi.

You have been asked to participate in this study because of your vast experience as a policy maker, administrator, faculty member or student in a public higher education institution. By participating in this study, you will be asked to respond to a few questions based on your current role or your experiences in one of the capacities mentioned above. It is expected that the interview will last for forty (40) minutes.

Thank you in advance for your time and for your consideration of this project.   Kindly please let me know if you require any further information or need any further clarifications. I will be happy to provide these, should you require them.

Yours Sincerely,
Weade Kobbah-Boley   Dr. Regina Kaume-Mwinzi
Doctoral Candidate   Supervisor
Duport Rd, Paynesville, Liberia   Address:
Telephone Number: 231-886-424-728   E-mail:
E-mail: wkobbah@yahoo.com

![UNICAF UNIVERSITY logo]

Debriefing Form Template

Debriefing is an important element of the research process at which the researcher takes the opportunity, once data has been collected, to provide participants any necessary or additional information to understand the nature of the researcher's project / dissertation.

A Debrief Form should include the following:

- The title of the study
- Thank the participant for taking part in the study
- Provide a description on the nature of the investigation. Ensure that the language used to describe the study is appropriate to the participant population i.e., a psychology student will have a much greater understanding of the terminology or jargon than a member of the public. The Form should also include the aim of the research, details of the tasks participants were asked to undertake, how each task is measured and the researcher's hypothesis (if appropriate).
- Provide us assurance that data will be held confidential or anonymous as appropriate and that participants have the right to withdraw their data retrospectively and without explanation.
- Provide contact details of the researcher (and supervisor in the case of dissertation):

July 5, 2021

Dear Sir/Madam:

Thank you for participating in the study on Challenges in Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Post Conflict Societies in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Liberia and Sierra Leone. The study sought to identify challenges in administration of public Higher Education Institutions after violent conflicts, measures taken by administrators when they faced these challenges, the impact of these challenges on the administration of public higher education institutions and the mitigation strategies of these challenges. You were asked to participate in the study by responding to interview questions about your work as an administrator/policymaker. The researcher interviewed 20 participants in similar positions and the responses were organized into occurring themes for analyses and interpretation.

Please be reassured that the information you provided will be held in the strictest confidence and not attributed to you in the study. However, you have the right to withdraw any or all information you provided if you decide not to participate in the study, without any consequences. You can also modify any information provided if you so desire. I will be happy to make all of the necessary changes before publication.

Thank you again for your kind participation and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Weade Kobbah-Boley

Doctoral Student

Telephone Number: 231-886-424-728

Email: wkobbah @yahoo.co

<u>Research Tool</u>

Topic: Challenges in Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Post Conflict Societies in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Liberia and Sierra Leone

Research Interview Questions
Background

My name is Weade Kobbah –Boley. I am a doctoral student of the Unicaf University conducting research on "Challenges in Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Post Conflict Societies in the 21st Century: A case study of Liberia and Sierra Leone." Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As indicated in our telephone conversation, I asked you to participate in this study because of your position as a Vice Chancellor/President/Past President of this University and the vast experience you have administering a public higher education institution, PHEI, after the war. Most studies of challenges in public higher education institution deal with generalities and very few focus on challenges particularly to administration in post conflict situations. I believe this study will make significant contributions to identifying these challenges and shedding light on how they were mitigated. I will ask you some questions about your background, role and experiences to inform the research. To ensure I capture all of the information correctly, please allow me to record this interview. This interview will take approximately forty (40) minutes to one hour.

Institution_____ Location_____

I.   Personal Information
  a. Gender F (   )   M. ( )
  b. What is your academic qualification?
  c. Current Position in your institution_____
  d. How long have you been in this position?
  e. What are the key responsibilities/functions of your office?

  II . Specific Challenges in the Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in post conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone.
  a. Please mention or list some of the challenges you know in the administration of .PHEIs in your country.
  b. Financial management
  1. How do you generate funds to run your institution?
  2. Does Government provide funds for your institution, if yes how often and if no give reasons..
  3. What percentage fo your operational costs would you say is provided by Government?
  4. How does your current financial situation affect the operations of the Institution?
  5. Was the financial situation any better before or after the conflict?
  c. Constraints of Policy Implementation
  1. Who designs Higher Education policies in your Country?
  2. Please name some of the constraints which inhibit policy implementation.

3. Who implements policies in your institution?

d. Lack of Infrastructural Development

1. Do you have adequate infrastructural facilities to meet your academic and operational demands?
2. What kind of school plants do you have and how are they maintained?
3. Can you describe some of the equipment in your institution?
4. How are they procured?

e. Incessant student unrest

   Is there any record of incessant student unrest in your institution, if yes in which way have this deviant behavior affected teaching and learning?

5. Have these unrests increased or decreased since the conflict in your country?
6. What do you think is responsible for such deviant behavior among students in your institution?

II.   Provision of Quality Education in Public Higher Institutions

1.   How does your institution provide quality education in post-conflict Liberia or Sierra Leone?
2. What is the role of the Ministry of Education in curriculum planning and development for HEIs?
3. How is the curriculum implemented to ensure quality education in your country?
4. How are education policies and programs implemented by HEIs administrators in post conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone?

f. Academic Staff Qualification

1. What is the minimum academic staff qualification to hold a teaching position in your institution?
2. What is the maximum academic qualification for a teaching position in your institution?
   3, Are your faculty/staff adequately trained for teaching at a public higher institution of learning?
3. What specific procedures does the government use for faculty and staff recruitment in your institution?
4. Please mention the major shortcomings and staff ?.
5. What measures have you used to handle the perceived deficiencies in the teaching profession in higher education?
6. What is the role of the Ministry of Education in in the provision of quality education in post-conflict situations in your country?

IV. Political Influence on Public Higher Education Institutions

1. What role does the national government play in the administration of your institution?
2. Do you have adequate political support to manage your Public Higher Education institution in your country?
3. Who appoints senior education administrators in your institution?
4. What are the procedures used for the appointment of senior administrators in your institution?
5. Does the Government have direct control over your institution?

V.   Effective Leadership and Management of Public Higher Education Institutions in post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone

1. Who makes pertinent decisions for your institution?
2. How would you best describe your leadership style?
3. Do you encourage the participation of other staff in decision-making in your institution?
4. How are decisions communicated to your staff in your institution?
5. In your leadership capacity, how do you handle conflict in your institutions

6. What additional policies and programs were introduced in your institution after the Conflict?
7. What specific results were these programs targeted to achieve in higher education?

VI. **Strategies that could be utilized by Administrators of Public Higher Education Institutions in post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone**

1. Which strategies would you think could be used to appoint senior administrators in Public Higher Education institutions in your country?
2. What measures could you introduce to motivate academic and non-academic staff in your institution to enhance job performance?
3. Which means did you employ to increase funding to your institution?
4. What measures will you adopt to encourage the government to increase funding to your institution?
5. What specific strategies will you use to address administrative challenges in your institution
6. How do you train and develop academic staff in your institution?
7. What measures will you use to improve infrastructural development in the institution?
8. Can you name some practices you use to motivate your staff?
9. How are these motivational procedures executed?

DEBRIEFING FORM

Title: Challenges in Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Post-Conflict West African Countries in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Liberia and Sierra Leone

Dear Participant:

Thank you for participating in the above-mentioned study. Your responses to the interview questions were very insightful and informative.

The research project is in partial fulfilment for a doctoral degree in education. The research seeks to identify specific challenges faced in administering Public HEIs in post-conflict situations, measures taken to by the administrators when they face the challenges, the impact of these challenges on the administration of the institutions and how they are mitigated upon. The research was based on the assumption that higher education institutions operating in post-conflict countries are confronted with more daunting challenges than others who have not experienced conflicts, yet these institutions can provide quality education.

The interviews have been conducted on one-on-one for in-depth information and will be transcribed with dominant themes selected to form the basis of analysis and interpretation. The data/findings will be validated and presented in a doctoral dissertation. All information gathered during the conduct of this research project will be solely handled by the researcher who will treat it with utmost confidentiality. Participants will be provided electronic copies of their individual interviews for review and amendment prior to the completion of the research project to ensure they confirm the information provided during the interviews and after. Participants are informed that they have the right to withdraw from the research without explanations and or reprisals. Documentation derived from the data will be shared with the researcher's Supervisor and Unicaf's IRB as required. The completed and approved copy of the dissertation could be published.

Name of researcher	**Name of Supervisor**
Weade Kobbah-Boley	**Dr. Regina Kaume- Mwinzi**
Unicaf contact details	Unicaf Supervisor Contact details
Student ID: A171D398014	
Unicaf University, Malawi	
Lilongwe, Malawi	
Tel: 231-886-424-728	
Email:wkobbah@yahoo.com	Email:

Appendix B Interview Guide

Topic: **Challenges in Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Post-Conflict Societies in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Liberia and Sierra Leone**

The research instrument to be used in this study is developed by the researcher. This is because an enormous effort was made to consult previously used peer-reviewed work on similar topics using interviews as a research tool, but to no avail. Since the researcher found no existing published validated interview tool adaptable for this study, it was imperative that a research tool be designed that aligned with the research.

The research tool proposed for this study is topic-based, tailored to solicit responses germane to the research questions. It was developed and peer-reviewed to remove any biases and ensure it meets ethical standards. Participants in the study will be purposively selected based on their knowledge, experience and opinions about administering public higher education institutions or developing and implementing policies that governed public higher education institutions.

Interview Questions

Background

My name is Weade Kobbah–Boley. I am a doctoral student of the Unicaf University conducting research on Challenges in Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Post Conflict Societies in the 21st Century: A case study of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As indicated in our telephone conversation, I asked you to participate in this study because of your position as a Vice Chancellor/President/Past President of this University and the vast experience you have administering a public higher education institution, PHEI, after the war. Most

studies of challenges in public higher education institutions deal with generalities and very few focus on challenges particularly to administration in post-conflict situation. I believe this study will make significant contributions to identifying these challenges and shedding light on how they were mitigated. I will ask you some questions about your background, role and experiences to inform the research. To ensure I capture all the information correctly, please allow me to record this interview. This interview will take approximately forty (40) minutes to one hour.

Institution ⸻

Location ⸻

I. Personal Information

   a. Gender F ( ) M ( )

   b. What is your academic qualification? Bachelors, ( ) Masters ( ) PhD. ( )

     Other ( ), please specify. ⸻

   c. Current Position in your institution⸻

1. How long have you been in this position? ⸻

2. What are the key responsibilities/functions of your office?

II. Specific Challenges in the Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in post conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Please mention or list some of the challenges you know in the administration of PHEIs in your country.

b. Financial Management

1.   How do you generate funds to run your institution?

2. Does Government provide funds for your institution? if yes, how often and if no give reasons.

3. What percentage of your operational costs would you say is provided by the Government?

4. How does your current financial situation affect the operations of the Institution?

5. Was the financial situation any better before or after the conflict?

c. Constraints of Policy Implementation

1. Who designs Higher Education policies in your Country?

2. Please name some of the constraints which inhibit policy implementation.

3. Who implements policies in your institution?

d. Infrastructural Development

1. Do you have adequate infrastructural facilities to meet your academic and operational demands?

2. What kind of school plants do you have and how are they maintained?

3. Can you describe some of the equipment in your institution?

4. How are they procured?

e. Student unrest

1. Is there any record of incessant student unrest in your institution, if yes in which ways has this behavior affected teaching and learning

2. Have these unrests increased or decreased since the conflict in your Country

3. What do you think is responsible for such deviant behavior among students in your institution?

II. Provision of Quality Education in Public Higher Institutions

1. How does your institution provide quality education in post-conflict Liberia or Sierra Leone?

2. What is the role of the Ministry of Education in curriculum planning and development for HEIs?

3. How is the curriculum implemented to ensure quality education in your country?

4. How are education policies and programs implemented by HEIs administrators in post-conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone?

III. Academic Staff Qualification

1. What is the minimum academic staff qualification to hold a teaching position in your institution?

2. What is the maximum academic qualification for a teaching position in your institution?

3. Are your faculty/staff adequately trained for teaching at a public higher institution of learning?

4. What specific procedures does the government use for faculty and staff recruitment in your institutions? Please mention the major shortcomings of your faculty and staff.

IV. Challenges in Administration

1. What measures have you used to handle the perceived deficiencies in the teaching profession in higher education?

2. What is the role of the Ministry of Education in the provision of quality education in post-conflict situation in your country?

Political Influence on Public Higher Education Institutions

1. What role does the national government play in the administration of your institution?

2. Do you have adequate political support to manage your Public Higher Education institution in your country?

3. Who appoints senior education administrators in your institution?

4. What are the procedures used for the appointment of senior administrators in your institution?

5. Does the Government have direct control over your institution?

V. Effective Leadership and Management of Public Higher Education Institutions in post -conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone

1. Who makes pertinent decisions for your institution?

2. How would you best describe your leadership style?

3. Do you encourage the participation of other staff in decision making in your institution?

4.Challenges in Administration 4. How are decisions communicated to your staff in your institution?

5. In your leadership capacity, how do you handle conflict in your institutions?

6. What additional policies and programs were introduced in your institution after the Conflict?

7. What specific results were these programs targeted to achieve in higher education?

VI. Strategies that could be utilized by Administrators of Public Higher Education institutions in post conflict Liberia and Sierra Leone

1. Which strategies would you think could be used to appoint senior administrators in Public Higher Education Institutions in your country?

2. What measures could you introduce to motivate academic and non -academic staff in your institution to enhance job performance?

3. What means did you employ to increase funding to your institution?

4. What measures will you adopt to encourage the government to increase funding to your institution?

5. What specific strategies will you use to address administrative challenges in your institution?

6. How do you train and develop academic staff in your institution?

7. What measures will you use to improve infrastructural development in the institution?

8. Can you use some practices you use to motivate your staff?

9. How are these motivational procedures executed?

Appendix C: Provisional UREC Approval

Name	Weade Kobbah- Boley
Title of the Research project:	Challenges in Administration of Public of Higher Education Institutions in Post Conflict Societies in the 21st Century: A case study of Liberia and Sierra Leone.
Date:	11.10.2019

√ **Approved** without revision or comments.

☐ **Approved** with comments for **minor revision.**

Comments

The student's research project is Approved without additional comments.

Appendix D: Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee Decision DS

UREC Decision,Version   **2.0**

Unicaf University Research Ethics Committee Decision

Student's Name: Weade Kobbah-Boley

Student's ID #: R1711D3981014

Supervisor's Name: Current: Dr Yusuf Suleiman   Dr Regina Kaume Mwinzi (rejected)

Program of Study: UU-EDUD-900-3

Offer ID /Group ID: O26695G27434

Dissertation Stage: DS 3

Research Project Title: Challenges in the Administration of Public Higher Education Institutions in Post-Conflict Societies in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Liberia and Sierra Leone

Decision*: A. Approved without revision or comments

Date:

*Provisional approval provided at the Dissertation Stage 1, whereas the final approval is provided at the Dissertation Stage 3. The student is allowed to proceed to data collection following the final approval.

Appendix E. Sample of non-completed consent form.

Part 2: Certificate of Consent

This section is mandatory and should be signed by the participant(s)

I have read the foregoing information about this study, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss them. I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions, and I have received enough information about this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason for withdrawing and without negative consequences. I consent to the use of multimedia (e.g. audio recordings, video recordings) for my participation to this study. I understand that my data will remain anonymous and confidential. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Print name of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date:

If illiterate:

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had an opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of witness:

Signature of witness:

Date:

Appendix F Confirmation of Approval to do Research at Njala University

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NJALA UNIVERSITY

Directorate of Research & Development
Njala Campus, Moyamba District, Southern   Province, Sierra Leone
Courier delivery: 19 Henry Street; PMB, Freetown, Sierra Leone
Mobile: +232 (76) 542008/+232 (30) 632565   Email:
jpmoiwo@njala.edu.sl
Twitter: @UniversityNjala   Website: https://njala.edu.sl

To: The Responsible Authority

Date: 17th May, 2024

<u>CONFIRMATION OF APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH — MS. WEADE</u>

<u>KOBBAH-BOLEY</u>

I write to confirm that the Directorate of Research and Development (DRD) of

Njala University was in approval of the research conducted by Ms. Weade

Kobbah-Boley in Sierra Leone. This approval was in line with the

recommendation of the Research Council (RC) of

DRD, which is the Research Ethics Committee

(REC) or the Institution Review Board (IRB) of

Njala University.

Yours sincerely,

Ing. Dr. Juana Paul Moiwo (Post-PhD)

(Director, Research & Development, Njala University)

Appendix G: IRB Approval from the University of Liberia

University of Liberia

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Capitol Hill, Monrovia, Liberia
Tel: +231-775348744/775953914/776615408
Email: tayloric@ul.edu.lr (saydeegs@ul.edu.lr /iebboeek@ul.edu.lr
UL-lRB/JCT-CH/96/'24
ULIRB IORG-IRB Number: IRB00013730 FWA number: FWA00032959.

February 1, 2024

Mrs. Weade Kobbah-Boley

UNICAF University, Malawi.

Subject: "Challenges in Administration of Public Higher Institutions in Post-

Conflict Societies in the 21st Century: A Case of Liberia and Sierra Leone"

Dear Mrs. Kobbah-Boley:

Per the Policies and Procedures Handbook of the University of Liberia

Institutional Review Board (ULIRB), I am pleased to inform you that the UL-IRB

has approved your research as described above through an expedited review on

February 1, 2024. As part of its responsibility, the UL-IRB will evaluate the

research throughout to ensure adherence to human subject practices. The approval

for the research ends January 31, 2025.

During this research, please inform the UL-IRB immediately of any changes or

occurrences in the procedures relating to human subjects. Apart from the

protection of human subjects, you are prohibited from changes in the protocol that

has been approved of the IRB. All changes must be communicated to the IRB without delay.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bernice T. Dahn

Vice President, College of Health Sciences & Acting Chair, ULIRB

Appendix: H Confirmation Of Approval To Conduct Doctoral Research

School of Postgraduate Studies

UNIVERSITY OF SIERRA LEONE

4TH FLOOR

Email: postgraduate@usl.edu.sl   UNIVERSITY HOUSE

postgraduateusl@outlook.com   MOUNT AUREOL

Cell: +232 32 898450

FREETOWN   SIERRA LEONE

27th May 2024

Madam Weade Kobbah-Boley
Doctoral student
Unicaf University
MALAWI

 Dear Ms Kobbah-Boley

CONFIRMATION OF APPROVAL TO CONDUCT DOCTORAL RESEARCH

Following discussions with the respondents you interviewed during your study

visit at the University of Sierra Leone in 2021 as part of your doctoral research

work, I can confirm that all respondents signed the consent form and were

given approval for subsequent interviews.

This is in line with the University of Sierra Leone's ethics practice.

Kindest regards

………………………………………..

Prof. Ronnie Frazer-Williams

Dean

School of Postgraduate Studies

Appendix I: Confirmation of Approval to do Research at WVST University

WILLIAM V.S. TUBMAN UNIVERSITY
Tubman Town, MARYLAND COUNTY
MAILING: P.O. BOX 3570 HARPER, MARYLAND COUNTY, REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA, WEST AFRICA
Monrovia Office: 25th Street, Sinkor, Monrovia, Liberia
EMAIL: mgueta@tubmanu.edu.lr
Telephone numbers: (+231886748324)

Office of the Acting VPAA

May 8, 2024

Ms. Weade Kobbah-Boley
Doctoral Student
Unicaf University
Malawi

Dear Ms. Kobbah-Boley:

REF: Letter of Confirmation of Approval to do research

Greetings!

I have spoken with the key respondents to the qualitative research work that you have conducted. They have confirmed that you were given approval to do your research work at William V. S. Tubman University, Liberia. Though at the time Tubman University did not have an IRB, it is currently being developed.

I hope this will facilitate your studies.

With you in the service,

Dr. Maria Fe Rebecca D. Gueta
Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs