Sustainable Knowledge Management and Educational Innovation Technology in Nigerian Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: **The purpose of this paper is to analyse the impact of sustainable knowledge management and educational innovation in Nigerian higher education institutions. Nigeria, like other countries of the world, recognises education as the major instrument for effecting national development. Education is critical for the social, economic, and political development of Nigeria. These educational goals can be fully achieved if quality delivery is ensured in higher education in Nigeria. Higher education of good quality is critical for Nigeria to become globally competitive. This article identified and discussed the challenges of quality in higher education in Nigeria in the 21st century. The findings of this study reveal the need for sustainable knowledge management and innovation technology in the Nigerian higher education institutions. Lack of implementation of educational research findings, corruption in higher education institutions, lack of adequate electric power supply, and lack of sustainability are determinants for a major decline in the Nigerian higher education institutions. Also, the study's analysis is motivated by the observation that, due to the increasing unpredictability of educational policy makers, corrupt practices, and the inability to implement research findings, the Nigerian higher education institution has suffered a lack of innovation. Therefore, the authors recommend that the Nigerian government should meet the 26 per cent education funding as recommended by UNESCO. Besides, reform in existing higher education institutions in Nigeria can be attained via collaborative efforts between the government and other sectors of the Nigerian economy.**

Keywords: **Nigerian higher education, knowledge management, educational innovation, and sustainability development.**

1. INTRODUCTION

The advent of Information and communication technologies (ICTs) has led to diversity in knowledge management and innovative training approaches. While compiling a study on Information technology resources, knowledge management capability, and competitive advantage, Mao et al. (2016) recorded that knowledge management is the process-based ability of the organisation to mobilise and deploy knowledge-based resources to gain competitive advantage. But an earlier study piloted by Liu et al. (2004) sees knowledge management as having a tremendous effect on competitiveness, because knowledge management (KM) is not only the ability to catch all information and knowledge, but it is also a tool for maintaining information that will help staff to work more efficiently. However, knowledge management involves the capacity to acquire a skill and use the knowledge constantly to develop innovative knowledge. Therefore, the combination of different skills, both the existing and the new personal knowledge, enhances the management. Then again, Marouf and

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Agarwal (2016) reflected on knowledge management and uphold that knowledge management may help improve organisational processes and strategies, enhance institutional reputation, and promote collaborations and innovations.

Similarly, educational innovation, according to Halyna Mykhailyshyn and Oksana Kondur (2018) ruminates on the importance of distinguishing between the concepts "educational innovations" and "innovations in education". While innovation in education is a broader concept than educational innovation, they include educational, scientific and technological, infrastructural, economic, social, legal, administrative and other innovations. But noted that educational innovations are a process or technique of educational activity that differs significantly from established practice, and it is used to increase the level of efficiency in a competitive environment.

The educational innovations consist of analytical and procedural innovation, educational and technological innovation. It is substantiated that the education market is one of the most important elements of the national innovation system. Correspondingly, Innovative pedagogical processes through technology have to do with systematic and consistent renewal of the way we use and produce information and knowledge. Although the acknowledgement of the above fact has caused both developed and developing countries to embrace knowledge management and educational innovation.

However, knowledge management and educational innovation stand to be one of the many challenges faced by the Nigerian higher education system, yet the higher education institutions remain the engine that drives the nation's knowledge production. Despite the fact that knowledge management has been acknowledged as an approach for driving innovative processes in professional societies, there is still a lack of literature on its application in Nigerian higher education. Chen, Chen, and Padró (2015) piloted a study and concluded that higher education institutions should be able to meet the needs of students and society as well as meet the well-being of the institution itself.

Even though the Nigerian government depends on the export of crude oil to sustain its economy, there are still other enormous mineral treasures deposited in Nigeria. Unfortunately, Nigeria is yet to provide for her people, a quality of life that is proportionate with the abundant resources at her disposal (Kalejaiye, et. al., 2015). Hence, the future of the Nigerian government in the field of education, and more especially higher education, is massively challenging. Similarly, the Nigerian higher education institutions and students have faced challenges resulting from a lack of adequate financial resources, lack of maintenance, weak knowledge management, limited research and inability to use research findings, among others.

In light of this, the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, which is a global university performance table that access world class universities across all of the institution's core mission which include instruction, research, knowledge transfer, and international outlook, Times Higher Education (2016). A careful examination of these rankings for 2016/2017 reveals that no Nigerian university ranks among the top 500 universities in the world or in the top 100 universities in emerging economies, Times Higher Education (2016).

The weakness of the Nigerian higher education institution could easily be noted due to the inadequate or inefficient management of knowledge, which has led to the outrageous number of Nigerian youths migrating to other countries where educational innovation is appreciated and motivated. Millions of Nigerian youths in their attempt and effort to experience motivation and a better study environment like their peers in other countries, have continued seek answers.

Problem statement:

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly, consisting of 193 countries, assembled and adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This resolution is to be achieved by the year 2030. In order to reach these goals of sustainability, an individual's perception and attitude of Sustainable development needs to change, and this can be achieved through the means of education (Kanapathy et al., 2019). In order to reach these goals of sustainability, the knowledge management and educational creativity of the Nigerian higher education institution must be consistently checked. However, in the last two decades, knowledge management and innovation have been among the academic variables that attract the attention of governments and researchers both in developed and developing countries and Nigeria in particular. In Nigeria, however, a number of factors are tied to the poor implementation of knowledge management and technology in higher education institutions. Examples can be drawn from the ranking of all world higher education institutions by Times Higher Education (2016).

A close look at the amended Nigeria Higher Education Act 2013, which was built on the enacted Policy on Education 1977 (Federal Government of Nigeria 2013a). In connection, the federal government established the federal Ministry of Education in 1988 with a mandate to oversee the National Policy on Education. Consequently, the Federal Ministry of Education is the governing agency with the overall responsibility of mandating national policies and guidelines, management of uniform system and standards, designing the educational goals, financing, and ensuring quality control at all levels of education including the universal basic education in Nigeria as instruments of different statutory, including The Nigeria Federal Constitution of 1999 as amended and the National Policy on Higher Education (Salihu and Jamil 2015). However, the main functions of the Federal Ministry of Education, precisely in higher education, are to create new tertiary institutions based on the national needs, supervision, policy implementation, organising panels, evaluation and coordination of activities, nomination of governing councils, licensing, and overall monitoring and evaluation Federal Ministry of Education, 2018). Also, the Ministry of Education's responsibilities include arranging and collecting educational data, pursuing and maintaining identical standards, as well as evaluating and monitoring the quality and excellence in education. Since Knowledge is said to be the best possible basis for managing the human intellectual processes and resources for development. Knowledge is the ability to know, to remember, to be aware of skill and understanding, to guarantee human abilities, to be composed of many logical interrelationships, and to be organised in a single comprehensive system.

However, despite all the various programmes that have been designed by the government and the Ministry of Education in Nigeria, studies have shown that there is a lack of effective maintenance and consistency in knowledge management and innovation, and this has resulted into high rate of unemployment, mostly among the youth, especially the graduates.

Similarly, there is a limited study relating to this area of study; the literature noted that even with the limited study on knowledge management and educational technology in Nigerian higher education, there is a lack of implementation of the earlier research findings. In addition, the higher education in Nigeria seems to have responded negatively or lacks awareness of KM and innovative technology. Hence, this study seeks to explore these areas and close the gap.

Significance of the Study:

Despite growing awareness of sustainable knowledge management and educational innovation technology amongst developing countries and educational institutions, the Nigerian higher education institutes are still struggling to implement sustainability in the educational segment.

Therefore, this study explores and describes the inconsistency in knowledge management, educational innovation and technology in Nigeria. It shows the impact that consistent knowledge management has on Nigerian higher education institutions. This way, the study can be made a basis for the researchers to develop procedures and more effective strategies for government and educational stakeholders to assist in the innovation and technology in an improved way.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge management and educational innovation play a vigorous role in the growth and development of any modern economy. Knowledge management and educational innovation can be seen as the engine of educational production and a main thrust of national growth.

In trying to describe Knowledge management, Rowley (2000) submitted that: "Knowledge management is concerned with the exploitation and development of the knowledge assets of an organisation with a view to furthering the organisation's objectives. The knowledge to be managed includes both explicit, documented knowledge and tacit, subjective knowledge. Management entails all of those processes associated with the identification, sharing, and creation of knowledge. This requires systems for the creation and maintenance of knowledge repositories, and to cultivate and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and organisational learning. Organisations that succeed in knowledge management are likely to view knowledge as an asset and to develop organisational norms and values, which support the creation and sharing of knowledge". Therefore, knowledge management is defined as the supervision and maintenance of procedures leading to innovation, giving out knowledge, and technologically applying the knowledge in an organisational structure for operational and efficient education, creating solutions to environmental issues, as well as making valuable decisions in an organisation.

The role of Knowledge management and educational innovation technology in higher education institutions, economic and national development remains a subject of continuing conversation in every country and more especially in Nigeria.

Whether it is a developed or less developed country, knowledge management and educational innovation are significant. While Uzuegbu CP, and Arua U. (2015) noted that knowledge is the resultant expertise that accumulates and builds up as a person continues to interact, use, practice and experiment with information. Mao et al. (2016) conclude that knowledge management is the process-based ability of the organisation to mobilise and deploy knowledge-based resources to gain a competitive advantage. Afolakemi et al (2019) conducted a study on knowledge management awareness assessment in Nigerian tertiary institutions, and scholars noted that knowledge management is a recipe for increasing performance and promoting innovation in tertiary institutions.

Yet other scholars maintained that the Nigerian education sector has yet to fully appreciate the significance of knowledge management, thereby bringing the awareness level of KM low. The result of the study reveals that a positive relationship between awareness, current status and level of familiarity was noted. The study also recommended that KM awareness should continuously be improved in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Hence, Afolakemi et al.'s (2019) study is consistent with this study on consistency in knowledge management and innovation technology in Nigerian higher institutions. Then again, other scholars, including Sharma M, Kaur M (2016) noted that knowledge is a powerful tool for organisational competition and therefore becomes significant to every industry, including banking, education and governmental sectors. Also, an earlier study conducted by Laal M. (2011) noted that tertiary institutions have moved beyond being merely a knowledge provider to students, to also curating current knowledge for future use. Therefore, Knowledge produced should be properly managed to ensure its future availability.

Other literatures have proven that any institution that desires higher performance must identify and consider the practice of knowledge management, not just in Nigeria, but in other countries as well. For example, Charles & Nawe (2017) in their study revealed that staff of Mbeya University of Science and Technology (MUST) in Tanzania were not fully aware of Knowledge management practices in the same vain, Demchig B. (2015) piloted an assessment on level of KM maturity in Mongolian higher institutions using the Knowledge Management Capability Assessment (KMCA) model; it was discovered that maturity level of knowledge management practice was in level one, indicating knowledge sharing was not discouraged in Mongolian higher institutions. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the consistency of knowledge management and educational innovation technology in Nigerian higher institutions.

Consequently, educational innovation and technology are essential to most of the existing studies on performance and the changing approach of education, yet the evidence is still fragmentary in Nigerian higher education institutions. The advent of educational innovators has continued to trail expanded characterisations of student performance, personalised approaches, and wholly new models of school.

There is a need for a better understanding of how technologies need to be used to enhance this learning, as was noted in Radhika Kapur's (2018) study on innovation and educational technology. The study submitted that the primary concern of educational and Innovation technology is to make use of modern and scientific training, understanding methods, and instructional strategies in the education system. Presently, the use of technologies has assimilated distinction. The lecturers and students are making use of the internet on a widespread scale to produce statistics in several fields. While pointing out the importance of innovation, Radhika Kapur (2018) also mentioned the different categories of instructional strategies which includes, the use of PowerPoint presentations, chart reading, explanations, models, maps and many others. Innovation and educational technology help in bringing about transformations in instructional approaches.

According to the opinion of Johan and Ade (2019), who conducted a study on the Effectiveness of Using Interactive Electronic Modules on Student Learning Outcomes in an educational innovation course. The study noted that the quality of learning in the educational innovation course cannot be separated from the learning methods and teaching materials used in delivering learning materials to students. They conclude that the application of Interactive electronic modules on educational innovation courses is effective. This indicates that there should be constant application of innovation in the educational sector.

Sustainable development has been mentioned by a number of authors. Izabela Sztangret (2016) submitted that Sustainable development, which is also referred to as stable development or eco-development, is a concept in economics that presumes the level and quality of life to be the level guaranteed by civilizational development in particular time. Also, Gerwin (2008) and Kozłowski (2005) agreed that Sustainable development characterises such economic growth that leads to public consistency and an increase in the quality of the natural environment.

When defining sustainable development, the Brundtland definition is considered the most commonly used, and it says the following: Sustainable development is an expansion that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED 1987). However, (Robèrt et al. 2002) noted that the Brundtland definition is rather philosophical, and due to the strength of the issues we are facing as a society and the limited time to find solutions, there is a need to move towards global sustainability. Hence the need to improve healthy and effective means to address the growing number of contemporary sustainability challenges.

The importance of sustainable development led the United Nations (UN) to adopt the 17 sustainable development goal (SDGs) in 2015. The aim of this call by the UN is to appeal to all countries (both developed and developing countries) for action to promote prosperity while protecting the environment. Recognising the need to end poverty by strategically building economic growth that is focused on the social needs of the society, oscillating from education, health, equality, job opportunities and others. Vasiliki and Nikolaos (2019) documented a study on Education for Sustainable Development: A Systemic Framework for Connecting the SDGs to Educational Outcomes and submitted that sustainability is simply an attempt to reconcile growing concerns about a range of environmental issues with socio-economic objectives.

In contract with the many definitions of sustainable development, the authors argue that sustainable development is not just the ability of an organisation to exist constantly at a cost, but much more the capability to be consistently innovative at every changing phase of life.

A growing body of literature has tried to link knowledge and innovation since they are inextricably connected. Simon Emmanuel Hart and Dappa Kalapapa Benjamin (2020) conducted a study, and the findings show that inadequate funding, poorly trained personnel/manpower, as well as poor technology in operations affect the effective implementation of knowledge management.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, the authors considered the analytical approach, which involved a comprehensive desk study aimed at collecting secondary data from various sources such as previous research studies, books and periodicals, journals, research reports, policy documents, strategic plans, websites and newspapers.

The study also adopted the use of primary research to fill in the gaps by exploring subjects applicable to the study's objectives where information was limited or was not clearly understood. Hence, data was collected through personal consultations with key informants from representative organisations for higher education institutions, education stakeholders, employers, graduates, Heads of government Ministries and Departments and other relevant groups, for example, professional bodies, Nigerian Ministry of education amongst others. While the authors acknowledge previous research studies that discuss related subjects, the data on which this study is based were generated between 2015 and July 2020.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal the need for sustainable knowledge management and innovation technology in the Nigerian higher education institutions. The study's analysis is motivated by the observation that, due to the increasing unpredictability of educational policy makers, corrupt practices, and inability to implement research findings, the Nigerian higher education institution has suffered a lack of innovation.

Several studies have observed that the Nigerian HEI has progressed in the last 30 years in some ways, such as a high rate of student enrolment, an escalation in the number of higher education institutions, increased turnover of graduates, etc. On the other hand, there is still a long way to go in relation to graduate quality and employability (Pitan, 2016; Pitan, 2017; Okunuga & Ajeyalemi, 2018). In an approach to put forward the Challenges of Quality in Higher Education in Nigeria in the 21st Century, Asiyai (2013) noted ten factors which includes Inadequate funding, Inadequate teaching staff poor quality of teaching staff, Poor policy implementation, Lack of resources, Lack of information communication technology facilities, Frequent labour disputes and closures of universities, Lack of vibrant staff development programmes, Cultism and other vices, Brain drain, and Poor leadership. Although Asiyai (2013) recommended that the Nigerian government should do more to upgrade the higher education standard, until now, sustainable knowledge management and educational innovation technology are still under research. In the same view, Suleiman (2016) submitted that the infrastructure and other resources required to achieve the expectation of adequate mental health are lacking.

Then again (OECD, 2013) revealed that the level of coherence within and among the existing policies, programs, and institutions remains relatively weak. A look at the quality of Nigeria higher education, Chinyere et al (2019) agrees with (Iruonagbe, Imhonopi & Egharevba, 2015) who concludes that the Nigerian higher education system is bedevilled by series of challenges such as issues of general welfare for lecturers, brain drain, a rapid increase in the number of students, low course quality and difficulties in governance structures. Chinyere et al (2019) study then concludes that some HEIs in Nigeria lack adequate teaching pedagogy, funding and infrastructure to carry out the teaching of employability skills. Noting that quite a lot of practical and social implications stem especially from how to improve graduate employability in Nigeria, the need to create a base for HEIs and industry collaboration. Yet, there is still these same challenges in Nigerian HEI. Hence the need for sustainable knowledge management and innovative technology in Nigerian higher education institutions.

The studies of (Asongu & Tchamyou, 2016) are similar with that of (Filmer & Fox, 2014; Okolie et al., 2019), who also claimed that knowledge exchange in Nigeria and some African countries has been decreasing. According to Hart and Kalamama (2020), Knowledge management refers to an institutional strategic effort to gain a competitive advantage by capturing and using the intellectual assets held by its employees and customers to enhance learning and performance in the organisation. This means that the institution can make use of the knowledge management strategies acquired for better performance.

Having reviewed several literatures, this study upholds that the ability of the higher education institution to compete and survive in Nigeria is determined by the quality of its efficient and effective services in knowledge management and innovation technology, thereby resulting in performance.

Therefore, the authors further reveal four obstacles that challenge sustainable knowledge management and educational innovation technology in Nigerian higher education institutions.

Impediments to Educational Innovation

Lack of sustainability:

A study by Bello (2015) documented that educational growth and social development in developing countries are hindered by a number of factors ranging from inadequate teaching and learning facilities to inefficient delivery of quality, sustainable education, particularly in science and technology. For higher education to compete internationally, quality infrastructure is essential for sustainable development. This includes supporting access to clean and affordable energy, basic academic facilities, constant power supply, and other essential services. A recent study was conducted by Omede et al (2019) on The Impact of Nigeria's democratic leadership on Educational Policies and Values: A Case for Sustainable National Development. The study revealed that several endeavours have been made, especially with the expanding access to education through the spread of higher education. It is praiseworthy due to the high level of poverty within the country; Nigeria needs as many schools as it can get. The challenge, however, remains the quality of education.

Sustainable here as earlier stated, means the ability to maintain a general and continuous development that meets the current and future needs of society and can compete internationally. The educational sector happens to be the engine that pilots the knowledge growth of any nation. As such, it is not enough to provide adequate funding, but also to monitor how the funds are being used in order to achieve their goals and objectives. The application of a modern educational innovation approach seems to be lacking in Nigerian HEIs. This can be seen in the recent study documented by Chinyere et al (2019); Iruonagbe, Imhonopi & Egharevba (2015) "The Nigerian higher education system is bedevilled by a series of challenges". The lack of maintenance seems to be a big challenge facing the Nigerian Higher education institutions.

Lack of Adequate Electric Power Supply:

An Igbo aphorism states, "Can one look for the dark goat in the dark?" This signifies that it is almost impossible to find something in the dark without the help of light. One of the first things that a country seeks to acquire and sustain is electric power, but Nigeria and its higher education institutions have suffered a terrible setback in electric power supply in recent years. The electric power supply company is a government-controlled sector known as Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), initially known as the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA).

The PHCN's duty is to generate and dispense electric power to residential, industrial, governmental institutions and other commercial areas. Although a lot of fund had been invested in the power sector by different governments, Nigeria has

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struggled with nationwide blackouts as a result of failure in the power grid. According to (Ogheneovo 2020; Agba, 2010; Achimugu, 2020), the performance of PHCN over the years have come under serious criticism because of poor and deteriorating quality of services rendered to its customers. This study, therefore, observed that without adequate and efficient power supply, sustainable knowledge management and educational innovation technology in Nigerian higher education institutions will continue to suffer setbacks.

Corruption in higher education institutions:

Corruption is a universal social problem that misrepresents the conventional order of society by conferring undeserved benefits on oneself or groups. Transparency International in 2007 describes corruption as "the abuse of entrusted power by a public official or a businessperson for private gain". Corruption in higher education refers to a "lack of academic integrity" Denisova-Schmidt, 2017). The Nigerian higher education institution is not free of this, as seen in (Okojie, 2012, as cited in Uche, 2014), it states that Corruption has escalated in Nigeria and its practices extend to the university system. This vice is one of the challenges faced by the HEI, and it cuts across all sectors of the HEI. The concept is well captured by Adebisi, Adebisi, & Arogundade (2012), who submitted that Academic corruption refers to all wrongdoings and fraudulent activities committed within higher institutions of learning by institutional administrators, lecturers or teachers, students, and other stakeholders in the academic sector that have negative consequences on the standard of education and the academic goals of the institutions. These include nepotism, misappropriation of funds, illegal placement of fees, forgery, extortion, and result manipulation, amongst others. In an attempt to explain academic corruption, Chapman and Lindner (2016) reaffirm that academic corruption is a threat to the integrity of certificates obtained from the educational sector; this unethical practice is harmful and capable of destroying the very purpose of education.

Lack of Implementation of Educational Research Findings:

In order to bring about technological innovation in the system of Nigerian higher education institutions, it is necessary to point out the importance of academic research findings. The objective of academic research is to inform action. Education professionals are always learning; they conduct analytical research by using available data to produce results and adapting their activities in line with the information established, with the view to improving and familiarising themselves with contemporary demands. Since educational research must be of high quality in order to produce knowledge that is applicable outside of the study setting, improving and implementing the findings of the research is imperative. Hence, the Nigerian higher education institutes lack the implementation of educational research findings.

Okoroma (2006) noted that over the years, the gap between educational policies and goal attainment due to inadequate implementation of these policies has become of great concern to many observers. Then again, Akhuemonkhan et al. (2013) and Garba (Garba, 2004) noted that the first challenge affecting entrepreneurship education is poor curriculum implementation across tertiary institutions. This unpleasant state of affairs has made the goals of the entrepreneurship intervention in Nigeria very elusive. Therefore, it is not enough to identify the challenges faced by higher education, but it is also important to consider the kinds of innovative methods needed to be made use of. Shao-Chee Sim (2018) noted the importance of research which includes; Better understand evolving community needs, inform program development and refinement, Measure the outcomes of programs and account for use of resources, promote organizational learning, create new understanding about what works and what does not, Strengthen the case for program funding, Articulate context, rationale and benefits of programs to communicate with stakeholders, boards, funders, audiences. Quality improvement. However, this seems to be lacking in Nigerian higher education institutions. But then, there are lots of benefits of the implementation of innovations and educational technologies, which have proved to be beneficial to the individuals in carrying out the functioning of the educational institutions in an appropriate manner Radhika Kapur, 2012). Some of the benefits of implementation includes to breed of Concepts by providing solutions to challenges. With innovation and the use of modern technology methods, solutions can be achieved for problems. Most innovative solutions frequently come from those who are viewing the facts from a new angle or with new visions.

In spotting some of the benefits of research implementation, Radhika Kapur (2012) also reveals the need for improving productivity and effectiveness. There is a need for new approaches as the advent of new technologies emerges; in the same way, improvements in productivity and effectiveness should be sustained. The technologies need to establish real-time resources for data-based instructional decision making, student proscription, professional development and performance management. Developments should take place in technologies in such a manner that they can adapt to new requirements,

and users can take advantage of modern and innovative methods. Improvements can be brought about in productivity and effectiveness when the individuals are well-equipped in terms of the use of technologies. There is a need to continuously work towards up-gradation of competencies and knowledge in terms of various kinds of technologies (Smith, 2009).

5. RECOMMENDATION

The recommendations stated below are with reference to the findings from recent related literatures If put into practice in an effective manner, this would improve the academic achievements in Nigerian higher education institutions and thus help in organising tasks and functions in accordance with the recent international educational innovation technology.

Government should not just focus on an educational system that trains people to just pass through the educational system without any sustainable value, but Investment in the mindset of people so that people can think right. Understanding that every individual has an innovative ability. The electric power sector should be considered as the first priority by the government. Stakeholders should ensure that the electric power supply is not used as a political tool, and corrupt practices should be brought to book, and judgment be made according to the constitution without delay. All related empirical research findings and recommendations should be analysed and effected where necessary.

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