

Influence of Governing Councils on the management of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of Governing Councils on the management of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria. Three objectives with corresponding three research questions guided the study while three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study focused on funding provision of infrastructural facilities and provision of ICT facilities. The study adopted a survey research design. The population of the study comprised 13,513 staff and 834 members of the governing councils from the seven Federal and six State-Owned Universities in North Central Nigeria. The sample size for the study comprised 374 respondents who were selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Governing Councils and Management of Public University Questionnaire" (GCMPUQ) which was validated by experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha method and a reliability coefficient of 0.77 was obtained. Data were collected and analyzed using means and standard deviations to answer the research questions while Chi-Square statistic was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that, Governing Councils have positive influence on funding, provision of infrastructural facilities and ICT facilities. The study concluded that governing councils to a very high extent enhance the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended that, Government at Federal and State levels should increase funding of public universities especially those in North Central, Nigeria. Governing councils should make sure that facilities like student hostels, lecture halls, offices, libraries, roads, electricity are provided in order to achieve the objectives of establishing public universities in North Central, Nigeria. As 21st century universities, governing councils should develop synergy with university management to provide state of the art ICT facilities to encourage e-learning in public universities.

Keywords: Governing Councils, management, funding, infrastructural facilities, ICT facilities

INTRODUCTION

University education is an important level of education which avails the nation of high level manpower necessary for national development. University education prepares people through teaching, learning and research for acquisition of knowledge and skills for job performance in the civil service, business organization, private enterprises and corporations as well as individual enterprises, through production of high level manpower for the country's economy. Universities are major vehicles for economic and social development in different parts of the world. The welfare of citizens of any nation is closely tied to the quality and outreach of their university systems.

Universities abound in Nigeria as each University has been established by a law whether it is Federal or State Government (Korgba, 2011). Since the attainment of independence by Nigeria in 1960, many Federal, State and Private Universities have been established. According to National Universities Commission (NUC), an agency established by the Federal Government of Nigeria to regulate and act as a catalyst for positive change and innovation for the delivery of quality university education in Nigeria, there are currently 41 Federal Universities across the six geo-political zones of the country, 47 state owned universities and 75 private owned universities (NUC, 2018). This means that, Nigeria presently has a total of 163 universities.

The aims and objectives of university education in Nigeria are to: contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments; acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society; promote and encourage scholarship and community service; forge and cement national unity and promote national and international understanding and interaction. In order to achieve

the aims and objectives for which these Universities are set-up, each of the Universities has a Governing Council (NUC, 2018).

Governing Council in universities, sometimes referred to as committees, are integral part of university system and structure. The Governing Council is a body established by law to provide for effective management of the institution. The Governing Council of a University operates via law and is charged with the general control, ratification of appointments and promotion of staff, superintendence of the policy, finances and properties of the University. The Governing Council is the highest authority of the university and has full responsibility and control for the custody, disposition of all finances and properties of the university (Tyokyaa, and Odeh, 2014). The Governing Council is the highest policy making body of the university. The Chairman of the Governing Council is the Pro-Chancellor, while other members are constituted as follows: external members, including visitors, appointees from various interest groups and internal members, mainly university management, including representatives of the senate (Adesina as cited in Adetunji & Mojeed-Sanni, 2015). The University Governing Council (referred to as council) is the most important committee of the institution. The Council holds very important roles in the development of any university. In most cases the success and failure of any university depend on how effective the committee members can administratively perform their functions. A law enacted by Nigeria Parliament - the National Assembly, and signed into law on 10th July 2003 by President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo, constitutes the Governing Council as the most powerful organ of any university in Nigeria. Any member of the university governing council is expected to be knowledgeable and familiar with the affairs and tradition of the university, and must be of proven integrity (Adetunji & Mojeed-Sanni, 2015). Members of University Governing Councils have an individual and collective responsibility to use their best endeavours to ensure that the objectives of the University are being met and that Council properly and diligently exercises its functions and responsibility as the principal governing body of the University to ensure its overall good management and well being. The Governing Council has the responsibility for both the general direction and superintendence of its University. The Council also responds to the challenges involved in the

governance process by making the decisions for sustainable, ethical, and effective management of public university education, (Korgba, 2011). University Governing Councils are tasked with a plethora of activities in the overall management of universities whether public or private.

Management is an integral part of the university. The survival of a university is dependent largely on the quality of management or administrative services involved. The management of public universities in Nigeria and North Central-Nigeria in particular, involves the process of creating, maintaining, stimulating, controlling the university system to accomplish predetermined objectives. Management of university is a process involving certain functions and work activities that university managers (governing councils) perform to achieve the goals of the university. University management in its widest application include the whole act of carrying into effect any policy, plan or undertaking (Utile, 2009). It is an integrating mechanism which pulls policies and process together to achieve university goals. The management of universities in Nigeria is based on participatory functions of Governing Councils (Korgba, 2011). Some areas of participation include funding, provision of infrastructural facilities, and provision of ICT facilities among others.

Statement of the Problem

The Governing Council of a University by law is charged with the general control, ratification of appointment and promotion of staff, superintendence of the policy, finances and property of the University (Tsav, 2015). The supreme statutory body in the University is the Council which is charged with the powers of general control (superintendence) of policy, finances, property and staffing of the University including public relation, (Korgba, 2011). All contracts at the University and all appointments are made in the name of the Council even if such contracts or appointments are made by a committee of the Council or some designated individual like the Vice Chancellor. Contracts and appointments are only terminated by Council or in the name of Council, (Korgba 2011). The observations by the researchers indicate that, there are issues as to whether the Governing Councils are managing universities according to rules and mandate

establishing them. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate the influence of Governing Councils on the management of public universities in North-Central Nigeria.

Despite the responsibilities and roles of the Governing Councils on the management of universities, there appear to be a general uproar and outcry by the academic, non-academic and students over managerial activities by the Governing Councils in the Universities which in turn have a concomitant effect on the general growth in the smooth running of the universities in North-Central, Nigeria. The apparent decay experienced both in infrastructural and ICT facilities of the Universities which is due to the fact that activities of the Governing Councils in the management of the Universities need improvement. The crux of the matter lies in the supposition that Governing Councils' activities in the management of public universities especially in funding, provision of infrastructure and availability of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities in public universities in North Central Nigeria needs to be reviewed as observed by Korgba (2011). The researchers observed that, Governing Councils activities in management of universities in the area of study appear to be hurriedly done. Other areas of concern include poor and inadequate lecture halls, students' hostels, e-libraries and poor disbursement of allocated funds without proper monitoring by the Governing Councils. This study as a concern to the researchers therefore, seek to investigate the influence of Governing Councils on the management of public universities in the areas of funding, provision of infrastructures and ICT facilities in public Universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study is to examine the influence of Governing Councils on the management of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the extent to which Governing Councils influence the funding of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria.
2. determine the extent to which Governing Councils influence the provision of infrastructural facilities in public universities in North Central Nigeria.

3. determine the extent to which Governing Councils influence the provision of ICT facilities in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

1. To what extent do Governing Councils influence the funding of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria?
2. To what extent do Governing Councils influence the provision of infrastructural facilities in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria?
3. To what extent do Governing Councils influence the provision of ICT facilities in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant influence of Governing Councils on the funding of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant influence of Governing Councils on provision of infrastructural facilities in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria
3. There is no significant influence of Governing Councils on the provision of ICT facilities in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study comprised 13,513 staff and 834 members of Governing Council totaling 14,347 from seven federal and six state owned Universities in North Central Nigeria. A sample of 389 respondents comprising staff and Governing Council members. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample size because the population was homogeneous. A 30-item structured questionnaire developed by

the researchers titled “Governing Council and Management of Public Universities Questionnaire (GCMPUQ)” was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by experts in Tests and Measurement and Administration and planning from the Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The questionnaire was trial tested using 30 respondents that were not part of the sampled population. The data collected was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficient which yielded 0.77. The coefficient indicated high internal consistency which proved that the instrument was reliable to be used for field work.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions and a non parametric statistic of Chi-square to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument which takes the form of a continuum of Very High (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and No Extent (NE) was scored thus; VHE=4, HE=3, LE=2 and NE=1. The Mean benchmark for the influence was calculated thus;

$$\frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = 2.50$$

Therefore any item with a Mean value of 2.50 and above was considered High Extent and Mean values below 2.50 were considered Low Extent.

For the Chi-square test of hypotheses, the decision was based on P-values and Alpha values. When $P < .05$, it was considered “Significant Influence” and $P > .05$ was considered “No Significant Influence”.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents results of the data analysis and discussion of findings based on the results. The presentation and interpretation follow the sequence of the research questions and testing of hypotheses.

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent do Governing Councils influence the funding of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria?

To answer this research question, responses on the extent to which Governing Councils influence the funding of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria were collected and analyzed as shown in Table1

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Extent of Influence of Governing Councils on the Funding of Public Universities in North-Central, Nigeria

S/N	Item Statement	N	VHE	HE	LE	NE	Mean	SD	Decision
1	The research grants for conducting research in the universities are solicited by governing councils	374	167	110	76	21	3.13	.88	High Extent
2	Investment in new teaching facilities are enhanced by university governing councils	374	161	102	70	41	3.02	.85	High Extent
3	The universities Governing Councils lobby for financial supports from both private sector and spirited individuals to fund university education	374	181	90	71	32	3.12	.93	High Extent
4	Governing councils look inward to broaden the Internally Generated Revenue Base (IGR) of the universities with a view to support the universities	374	200	110	50	14	3.33	.99	High Extent

5	Governing councils simply do not see fundraising as getting money only but create, build and sustain relationships	374	83	78	118	95	2.40	1.0	Low Extent
Cluster Mean							3.00	.93	High Extent

Source: Field Work: 2018

Data presented in Table 1 revealed that except for item 5 with a mean of 2.40, the respondents rated “High Extent” on items 1 – 4 with mean scores ranging from 3.02 – 3.33. The table also revealed the corresponding Standard Deviation values ranging from .85 - 1.00 which showed that the respondents were unanimous in their responses. The cluster means of all the items was revealed to be 3.00 and SD of .93. This indicates from the cluster mean that Governing Councils to a high extent influence on funding of public universities.

Research Question Two: To what extent do Governing Councils influence the provision of infrastructural facilities in public universities in North- Central Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Influence of Governing Councils on the Provision of Infrastructural Facilities in Public Universities in North-Central, Nigeria

S/N	Item Statement	N	VHE	HE	LE	NE	Mean	SD	Decision
6.	Governing Council plays the overall responsibility for the university policy including	374	105	60	117	92	2.48	.88	Low Extent

provision of infrastructure									
7.	Governing councils provide a mechanism for delivering (short-term and medium-term) infrastructures through TETFUND and PTF.	374	142	113	80	29	2.93	.88	High Extent
8.	Timely intervention of Governing Councils savages the decay in infrastructures in universities	374	149	100	79	46	2.94	.90	High Extent
9.	The Governing Council approves the release of fund for the purchase and installation of furniture items and office equipment	374	170	103	57	44	3.07	.81	High Extent
10.	Governing councils provide assistance in form of grants to enable delivery of key infrastructures to universities who ordinarily could not be able to afford the full cost	374	128	113	87	46	2.86	.89	High Extent
Cluster Mean							2.86	.87	High Extent

Source: Field Work: 2018.

Analysis of data as presented in Table 3 shows the mean responses of respondents on the influence of governing councils on provision of infrastructural facilities in public universities in North Central Nigeria with corresponding Standard Deviation values. Data presented on Table 3 revealed that except for item 11 with a mean of 2.48, the respondents rated “High Extent” on

items 12 – 15 with mean scores ranging from 2.86 – 3.07. The table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .81 - .90 which showed that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses. The cluster mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.86 and SD = .87.

Research Question Four: To what extent do Governing Councils influence the provision of ICT facilities in public universities in North-Central Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on the Influence of Governing Councils on the Provision of ICT Facilities in Public Universities in North-Central, Nigeria

S/N	Item Statement	N	VHE	HE	LE	NE	Mean	SD	Decision
11.	Councils approve ICT development, investment and application in the universities	374	161	103	69	41	3.03	.99	High Extent
12.	Governing councils ensure affordability and access to ICT facilities in universities.	374	148	104	76	46	2.94	.89	High Extent
13.	The handling of ICT property rights are enhanced by university's councils	374	87	88	110	89	2.46	.88	Low Extent
14.	Developing an institutional framework for ICT policies is enhanced by university governing councils	374	141	107	61	65	2.86	.87	High Extent

15.	University councils develop mechanism for attracting the appropriate ICT facilities.	374	136	118	73	47	2.91	.86	High Extent
Cluster Mean							2.84	.90	High Extent

Source: Field Work: 2018.

Data presented on Table 3 revealed that except for item 13 with a mean of 2.46, the respondents rated “High Extent” on items 11, 12, 14 and 15 with mean scores ranging from 2.86 – 3.03. The Table also revealed close Standard Deviation values ranging from .81 - .90 which showed that the respondents were unanimous in their responses. The cluster mean of all the items was revealed to be 2.84 and SD = .90. It can be deduced from this finding that University Governing Councils to a high extent influence the provision of ICT facilities in public universities in North Central, Nigeria

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of Governing Councils on the funding of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test of the Influence of Governing Councils on the Funding of Public Universities in North-Central, Nigeria

	Df	χ^2_{cal}	Sig	Alpha Level	Remark
Chi-square	13	112.36	.000	.05	Significant
Number of Valid Cases		374			

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2_{cal} = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value

Table 4 showed the Chi-square calculated value of 112.36, degree of freedom (df) =12 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that, Governing Councils have significant influence on the funding of public universities in North-Central, Nigeria

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant influence of Governing Councils on the provision of infrastructural facilities in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria

Table 5: Chi-Square Test of the Influence of Governing Councils on the Provision of Infrastructural facilities in Public Universities in North-Central, Nigeria

	Df	χ^2_{cal}	Sig.	Alpha Level	Remark
Pearson Chi-square	13	103.62	.000	.05	Significant
Number of Valid Cases		374			

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2_{cal} = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value

Table 5 showed the Chi-square calculated value of 103.62, degree of freedom (df) =12 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that, Governing Councils have significant influence on provision of infrastructural facilities in public universities in North-

Central, Nigeria **Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant influence of Governing Councils on the provision of ICT facilities in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test of the Influence of Governing Councils on the Provision of ICT facilities in Public Universities in North-Central, Nigeria

	Df	χ^2_{cal}	Sig.	Alpha Level	Remark
Chi-square	13	101.19	.000	.05	Significant
Number of Valid Cases		374			

Df = Degree of Freedom; χ^2_{cal} = Chi-Square Calculated Value; Sig = P-Value

Table 6 showed the Chi-square calculated value of 101.19, degree of freedom (df) =12 and a sig (P-value=0.00) which is less than the alpha value ($\alpha=.05$). Since $P<.05$, the result is significant, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that, Governing Councils have significant influence on provision of ICT facilities in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria

Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings derived from the results of the study, the following were discussed.

The first finding of the study revealed that, Governing councils have positive influence on the funding of public universities in North Central, Nigeria. The respondents indicated from the findings that, research grants for conducting research in the universities are solicited by

governing councils, investment in new teaching facilities are influenced by university governing councils. Governing Councils lobby for financial supports from both private sector and spirited individuals to fund university education and governing councils look inward to broaden the Internally Generated Revenue Base (IGR) of the universities with a view to supporting the universities. In a similar vein, a test of related hypothesis revealed that Governing Councils have significant influence on the funding of public universities in North-Central. This finding corroborates with that of Halidu (2015), who found that a relationship exists between funding solicited by Governing Council and effective management of the University of Ibadan. The finding however disagrees with that of Adetunji (2015) (whose study on the problems posed by the governing councils in the development of Nigerian Universities). University management development plans are influenced both positively and negatively by the governing councils while university management finds it difficult to implement decisions they believed would promote good practices. Governing councils are sometimes indifferent to university management decisions. The finding of this study as revealed could be that the university governing councils in North central Nigeria have been up and doing of its statutory roles regarding funding in the public universities. However, item 5 showed low extent of influence and as such, governing councils could improve on it to make it significant.

The second finding of the study revealed that, Governing councils have positive influence on provision of infrastructural facilities in public universities in North Central, Nigeria. The respondents indicated from the findings that, Governing Councils provide a mechanism for delivering (short-term and medium-term) infrastructures through TETFUND and PTF, timely intervention of Governing Councils savages the decay in infrastructures in universities, Governing Councils approve the release of fund for the purchase and installation of furniture items and office equipment and Governing Councils provide assistance in form of grants to enable delivery of key infrastructure to universities who ordinarily could not be able to afford the full cost. In a similar vein, a test of related hypothesis revealed that Governing Councils have significant positive influence on the provision of infrastructural facilities in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria. This finding corroborates with the views of Okafor and Onuoha (2016)

who opine that, through the provision of grants and/or advice to the facilities and the affiliated programmes from TETFUND and PTF, Governing councils provide a mechanism for delivering short-term and medium-term infrastructures through lobbying. The finding is at variance with that of Adebisi and Aina (2009), who reported that the present Nigerian university system which suffers from inadequate infrastructure has significant implications for university governance. The finding of this study as observed could be that Governing council in public universities in North Central Nigeria enhances the purchase and installation of computers and television sets for existing and newly completed University buildings. However, item 6 showed low extent of influence as such governing councils could improve on it.

The third finding of the study revealed that, Governing Councils have positive influence on the provision of ICT facilities in public universities in North Central, Nigeria. As revealed from the findings, the respondents indicated that, Governing Councils approve ICT development, investment and application in the universities, ensure affordability and access to ICT facilities in universities, enhance the development of institutional framework for ICT policies and develop mechanism for attracting the appropriate ICT facilities. In a similar vein, a test of related hypothesis as shown in Table 6 revealed that Governing Councils have positive influence on the provision of ICT facilities in public universities in North-Central, Nigeria. This finding corroborates with that of Adeyemi (2016) who reported a significant relationship between the availability of ICT and effective management of universities. The finding however disagree with that of Sofowora, Oladoyin and Sofowora (2015) whose study to assess the impact of Information and Communication Technology on administration and management of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife Osun State found that there were inadequate facilities to achieve effective e-administration in OAU Ile-Ife. The present finding as observed could be that provision of ICT facilities for academic purposes in universities in North Central, Nigeria has been greatly enhanced by the university governing councils. However, item 13 showed low extent of influence as such governing councils could improve on it to have positive influence

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that University Governing Councils to a high extent influence the management of public universities in North Central, Nigeria. The University Governing Councils positively influence the funding provision of infrastructural and ICT facilities.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations were made

1. Government at Federal and State levels should increase funding of public universities especially those in North Central Nigeria to improve on the provision of infrastructural facilities.
2. Governing Councils should make sure that infrastructural facilities like students' hostels, lecture halls, offices, libraries, roads, electricity are provided in order to achieve the objectives of establishing public universities in North Central, Nigeria.
3. As 21st century universities, governing councils should synergize with university management to provide state of the art ICT facilities to encourage e-learning and e management in public universities.

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