
Education Stakeholders' Roles and the Administration of Public Universities in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study examined education stakeholders' roles and the administration of public universities in Rivers State. This study adopted the correlation research design. The population of the study was 93 principal officers and Management Staff in the three public universities in Rivers State. (University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education). The entire population was studied as a census without sampling due to the manageable size of the population. The instruments used for data collection in the study were two sets of self-designed questionnaire titled "Education Stakeholders Roles Questionnaire" and "Administration of Public Universities Questionnaires". The instruments were validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation. The internal consistency of the instruments was determined by using Cronbach Alpha statistics to determine the reliability of the instruments. Reliability coefficients of 0.88, 0.79 and 0.80 were obtained for the first instrument and 0.87 was obtained for the second. The research questions were answered and the hypotheses tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed among others that respondents were of the view that there is a high positive relationship between stakeholders' role in staff recruitment, provision of school facilities and administration of public universities in Rivers State. This is seen in the r-cal values of 0.80 and 0.83 respectively. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that university administration through its Public Relations Unit should come up with deliberate strategies on how to engage the various external stakeholders to increase funding of universities, as this will ensure easy administration and ultimately improve the quality of university education provided.

Introduction

Education all over the world is known to be an indispensable tool needed for the growth and development of individuals and the society in general. It is commonly perceived as the most powerful

weapon in alleviating poverty, elevating economic growth and producing skilled human resources (Osuji & Koko, 2018). The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) in its National Policy on Education pointed out that education is an instrument per excellence for achieving national development. There is no sector of the economy where education either in its formal, non-formal or informal form is not required. Adenola (2017) defined education as a process of acquiring skills, obtaining relevant knowledge and aptitude in order to survive in the world. Formal education in Nigeria is structured majorly on three levels-basic education (primary and junior secondary school), senior secondary school and tertiary education levels.

Tertiary education, also referred to as third-level, third-stage or post-secondary education, is the education level following the completion of secondary education. The World Bank (2019) describes tertiary education as including universities as well as trade schools, colleges of education, polytechnics, et cetera. Similarly, the National Policy on Education in Amie-Ogan and Fekarurhobo (2021, p.56) identified the goals of tertiary education as follows:

- i. to contribute to national development through higher level manpower training
- ii. provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in informal and formal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians
- iii. provide higher quality career counseling and lifelong learning programmes and prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the world of work
- iv. reduce skill shortages through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market
- v. promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community services
- vi. forge and cement natural unity and promote national and international understanding and interaction.

In order to achieve these objectives government at Federal and State levels in Nigeria have over the years established several universities across the 36 states of the federation. Given that these universities are established by the government, the universities managements report directly to the Governor or President as their visitor. This makes the government major stakeholders in the provision of university education as they have some statutory roles to perform to ensure the smooth functioning of public universities towards the achievement of the set goals. Aside from the government, private profit and non-profit organizations both locally and internationally support university education in one way or the other. This makes them stakeholders in tertiary education delivery as well.

Stakeholders are persons or group of persons who have an interest in the success and welfare of an organization, school or subject activity. McGrath and Whitty (2017) defined stakeholders as individuals or groups who have an interest or some aspect of rights or ownership in a project and can contribute in the form of knowledge or support, or can impact or be impacted by the project. Thus, education stakeholders are individuals who have an interest in or are impacted by the educational system, that is, people who have a “stake” or vested interest in the success and welfare of a school or educational system. According to Adebayo in Yaro, Salley and Ashad (2018), education stakeholders are groups of people who are interested in the welfare, success and progress of a school and its students. Asiyai (2015) categorized education stakeholders into two groups. They include internal and external stakeholders.

According to Junaid (2016), internal stakeholders are those who work within the school system daily. They include government, who established the institution or service provider, students on whom all the activities of university education are centered, academics who are constantly engaged in teaching, research and community service, university administrators who manage the affairs of the universities by providing leadership, non-academic staff and other management staff, principal officers, senators, directors of institutions, heads of departments and internal members of governing council. External stakeholders are the National Universities Commission (NUC), Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), nongovernmental organizations, community based organizations, parents, employers of labour, development agencies both local and international, and the society as a whole.

Stakeholders play important roles in the effective administration of universities as the purpose of each stakeholder is to reach a common educational goal through team efforts. When multiple stakeholders are engaged, the team effort increases the chances of success in reaching these goals (Leisyte & Dee, 2019). The goals of stakeholders in the administration of universities, according to Brussels (2011), should facilitate academic and administrative efficiency, create enabling environment for the attainment of institutional goals. Stakeholders should know their functions, responsibilities and boundaries in provision of quality education for the nation. The internal organization and administration of each university in the country is the responsibility of government as the number one internal stakeholder. This is to ensure that institutions are run in consonance with national goals and aspirations.

The roles of internal and external stakeholders in the administration of universities remain very imperative. These roles are many and varied but this study will highlight funding, facilities, admission, employment, curriculum as areas of stakeholder's roles in the administration of public universities in Rivers State. Government who has been the main source of fund for education in Nigeria has not been able to meet the demands of university education system (Asiyai, 2015). Much sacrifice is required from education stakeholders to improve the quality of university education. Systematic transformation efforts can involve the stakeholders in achieving the desired changes in the administration of public universities in Rivers State. It is on this background that this study hopes to examine the relationship between education stakeholders' roles and administration of public universities in Rivers State.

Administration is a careful and systematic arrangement of resources for the realization of the objective of an organization. It is concerned with the implementation of predetermined policies and decisions in the day to day running of an organization towards the realization of the stated goals. According to Amadi-Eric (2018), administration is a process of systematically arranging and co-ordinating the human and material resources available to any organization for the main purpose of achieving its stipulated goals.

Administration is the process of achieving formal goals through group efforts. It is the harnessing of various activities of a group into an entity to actualize the common goal of the organization. Administration involves coordinating human, financial and material resources for the actualization of pre-determined goals of an organization. It is aimed at doing things right in order to avoid wastage (Okoroma, 2016).

Also, Peretomode (2019) defines administration as an act and a process of organizing human and material resources and implementing rules, plans, policies and programs in order to achieve specific objectives. Therefore, administration can be said to be concerned with proper organization of men and materials to achieve a set goal. It involves doing the work or getting the work done by others. Administration is necessitated by coming together of men in groups or organizations.

Educational administration can be defined as a means of achieving the goals of education through effective and efficient manipulation of available inputs. Amadi-Eric (2018) defined educational administration as the process of bringing men and materials together for effective and functional teaching and learning in a school. According to him, the focus of educational administration is the enhancement of teaching and learning. Peretomode (2019) defined educational administration as “essentially a service or activity through which the fundamental objectives of the educational process may be effectively and efficiently realized.” Educational administration broadly means running educational institutions, which involves guidance, leadership and controlling of the efforts of individuals in the achievement of the goals of the institution (Ayanniyi, 2017). Educational administration also involves management of resources, human, materials and evaluation or appraising the result of educational efforts.

The smooth running of any educational institution depends largely on the availability of resources, be it human, material or financial. These resources also determine to a large extent the achievement of the set goals of any organization. Ozigi and Canham in Gambo and Fasanmi (2019), opined that no organization can carry out its functions effectively without adequate financial resources at its disposal. Funding, which represents financial resources, plays a vital role in the administration and development of universities.

Most of the recently recorded crisis in Nigerian Universities are traceable to funding issues (Awe, 2020). Many universities have been shut down at one time or the other because of agitations on issues bordering on money, such as non-payment of allowance of workers, poor welfare services of students, the problem of insufficient buildings, underequipped laboratories and facilities, et cetera. The allocation of funds to Universities by the Federal Government has not been palatable. According to Gambo and Fasanmi (2019), university education sectors often blame the government for inadequate funding of University education while the government in turn blames the education sector of inefficient utilization of resources allocated to them. The result of inadequate funding is brain-drain, poor quality of teaching and research, collapsed structures and production of half-baked graduates who are not employable (Gambo & Fasanmi, 2019).

The Federal Republic of Nigeria, in its National Policy on Education, stated that to supplement government funding, universities and other tertiary institutions are encouraged to explore other sources of funding such as endowments, consultancy services and other commercial ventures (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). Scholars such as Ama and Uche in Iheoma (2018) are of the opinion that government alone cannot fund education, especially tertiary institutions. Therefore, relevant stakeholders are advised to invest in tertiary institutions for mutual benefits.

The extent to which universities are responsible for the appointment and determination of employment conditions reflect the level of institutional autonomy in staff recruitment. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) in its national policy on education as cited by Onyiye (2013), stated that

the internal organization and administration of each institution shall be its own responsibility. The traditional areas of academic freedom for institutions are as follows:

- i. appoint their staff
- ii. determine the contents of courses
- iii. select their students, except where the law prescribes otherwise
- iv. teach and select areas of research.

The above shows that the employment of staff is the sole responsibility of the universities. This also indicates that the Senate, as a body in the university education and also as an internal stakeholder in the institution, has the responsibility of the appointment and promotions of both the teaching and non-teaching staff. Staff employment in the universities should be done by making sure that the right type of academic staff are employed, devoid of tribalism, bribery, sentiments, political god-fatherism and favouritism, in order to have the best for the realization of the predetermined goals of universities.

University administrators should consider the appointment or employment of academic staff very seriously because the quality of academic staff is a prerequisite for the success of the institution. In agreement, Oluwuo, Obara and Nwabueze (2013) are of the view that academic staff play more important roles in the teaching-learning process than any other factor of production, and that the quality of education hinges upon the qualities of lecturers available.

University education was set out to fulfil certain objectives necessary for nation building. These objectives take place in an environment with physical, material, instructional among other facilities that combine to make the process of teaching and learning meaningful. Nwafor (2012) noted three resources needed for effective administration of the university system as human resources consisting of all personnel in the school, financial resources (the fund needed to finance the school) and material or capital resources (physical facilities, material and equipment which provide support services for the accomplishment of the goals of the school). Fagbohunka (2017) stressed that beside the human resources of the university, also of great importance is the material resource, which is used to facilitate the teaching and learning process especially when provided in the right quality and quantity. This means that as important as manpower resource in the university system, so is the provision of the infrastructure and other facilities which the human element of the system utilizes in developing a robust university system for academic excellence.

School facilities according to Peretomode (2017) are those things needed within the educational system which enable a skillful teacher to achieve a level of instructional effectiveness that far exceeds what is possible when they are not provided. He stressed further that the value of facilities in education becomes tangible when viewed in terms of their adequacy to the programmes they are designed for. In other words, the physical facilities of the university must satisfy both qualitative and quantitative conditions to achieve an excellent learners' outcome. Florence (2013) defined school facilities as the material resources provided for staff and students to optimize their productivity in the teaching and learning which leads to change in behaviour of students does not take place in a vacuum neither is it implemented without material supports. Studies have shown that learning takes place better and faster in a school environment with adequate infrastructures and facilities like buildings, accommodations, furniture, equipment, etc, than in an environment where

all these facilities are lacking. Nwabueze (2014) agreed that the condition of university facilities have an important impact on the academic performance of the students, as well as the effectiveness of the teacher in the pedagogical process. Therefore, in order to facilitate this high level of teaching and learning process in the universities there is need for the provision of well-planned and organized school facilities.

Sadly, university education in Nigeria has not been at its best as complains of steady degradation of school facilities occupies every discourse on university education and nation building (Gichohi, 2015). In view of this, Ijaiya (2013) opined that the quality of university education has become a source of concern and lamented on the rot in the system especially in the inadequacy of school facilities. Also, Oluwuo (2016) pointed out that students in technological institutions that are ill equipped with necessary facilities are simply acquiring certificates without developing their cognitive and technical skills. The essentiality of adequate facilities in tertiary institutions cannot be over emphasized as studies have shown schools and students in adequately funded institutions with basic facilities, infrastructure and qualified personnel having far reaching advantage over others. He reiterated that students need modern facilities and infrastructure to function competitively in a changing world that has become a global village and adequate provision and maintenance of these facilities and infrastructures reflects on the academic performance of the students.

Statement of the Problem

University education is very critical to the development of a nation. This is because it is at this level of education that the manpower needed for the various sectors of the economy are trained. This also explains why most developed nations of the world invest so much resources in improving the quality of education provided at university and other levels. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of public universities in Nigeria and Rivers State is not an exception. Over the years, there have been concerns raised by employers of labour and the general public on the quality of Nigerian university graduates. Employers complain that most graduates from universities in Nigeria are unemployable and huge resources are expended in training and retraining them. In agreement with that, Abiodun-Oyebanji (2014) opined that employers of labour appear to be lamenting bitterly over the substandard output of graduates, who are churned out yearly from Nigerian universities. Parents and guardians who can afford it, send their children to universities in developed countries and even some parts of Africa, such as Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, et cetera. This problem has been attributed to a number of factors including poor funding of universities by the government, political interference in recruitment of academic staff, lack of or poor educational facilities and instructional materials, among others.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined education stakeholder's roles and administration of public universities in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Ascertain the relationship between funding and the administration of public universities in Rivers State.
2. Determine the relationship between staff recruitment and the administration of public universities in Rivers state.

3. Find out the relationship between provision of school facilities and the administration of public universities in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between funding and administration of public universities in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between staff recruitment and administration of public universities in Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between provision of school facilities and administration of public universities in Rivers State?

Methodology

This study adopted the correlation research design. The population of the study was 93 principal officers and Management Staff in the three public universities in Rivers State. (University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education). The entire population was studied as a census without sampling due to the manageable size of the population. The instruments used for data collection in the study were two sets of self-designed questionnaire titled "Education Stakeholders Roles Questionnaire" and "Administration of Public Universities Questionnaire". The first instrument had two sections ("A" and "B"). Section "A" was designed to collect bio-data from respondents while Section "B" had statement items drawn from the research questions of the study. The second instrument was designed to measure effective administration of public universities. Responses to the questionnaire items were designed on a summated 4-point rating scale of: Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Strongly Disagree (SD)=2, and Disagree (D)=1.

The instruments were validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation. The internal consistency of the instruments was determined by using Cronbach Alpha statistics to determine the reliability of the instruments. Reliability coefficients of 0.88, 0.79 0.80 and 0.87 were obtained for the instrument. Copies of the instrument were administered on the respondents by the researchers with the help of two other trained research assistants. Completed copies of the instrument were retrieved personally by the researcher and their assistants. Out of the 93 copies of the questionnaire administered, 90 copies were successfully retrieved and used for analysis. This represents 97% retrieval rate. The research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The research questions were answered based on the value and direction of the correlation coefficient, (positive and high, positive but low, or negative and high or negative but low or moderate). Values of 0.1-0.4 were counted as low correlation; values of 0.5 were considered moderate correlation while 0.6-1.0 were considered high correlation.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between funding and administration of public universities in Rivers State?

Table 1: PPMC Analysis on Relationship between Funding and Administration of Public Universities in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X$	$\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum X\sum Y$	r-cal	Remarks
Funding (X)	90	472.04	1107.10					
						1110.11	-0.40	Low Negative
Administration of public universities(Y)	90	622.10	1102.12					

The analyses from Table 1 revealed that the correlation value of r is 0.40. This value is low and negative which implies that there is a low negative relationship between funding and administration of public universities in Rivers State. In other words, this means that stakeholders' reduced funding of universities did not really lead to poor administration of public universities in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between staff recruitment and administration of public universities in Rivers State?

Table 2: PPMC Analysis on Relationship between Staff Recruitment and Administration of Public Universities in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X$	$\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum X\sum Y$	r-cal	Remarks
Staff Recruitment (X)	90	901.03	2132.03					
						2356.01	0.80	High Positive
Administration of public universities (Y)	90	1102.01	2011.02					

The analyses from Table 2 revealed that the correlation value of r is 0.80. This value is high and positive which implies that there is high and positive relationship between staff recruitment and administration of public universities in Rivers State. This implies that stakeholders' performance of their roles in staff recruitment lead to more effective administration of public universities in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between provision of school facilities and administration of public universities in Rivers State?

Table 3: PPMC Analysis on Relationship between Provision of School Facilities and Administration of Public Universities in Rivers State

Variable	N	$\sum X$	$\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal	Remarks
Provision of school facilities (X)	90	930.02	2610.11					
						2146.20	0.83	High positive
Administration of Public Universities(Y)	90	1231.12	3235.03					

The analyses from Table 3 revealed that the correlation value of r is 0.83. This value is high and positive which implies that there is high and positive relationship between provision of school facilities and administration of public universities in Rivers State. This indicates that stakeholders' performance of their roles in provision of school facilities lead to improved administration of public universities in Rivers State.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding of the study for research question 1 revealed that there is a low negative relationship between stakeholders' role in funding and administration of public universities in Rivers State. In other words, this means that stakeholders' reduced funding of universities did not really lead to poor administration of public universities in Rivers State. This is in line with the findings of **Ade (2019), which** revealed that funding of secondary schools in Nigeria is inadequate in all critical areas of management. There is need for 26% budgetary allocation to education and for principals to effectively tap other sources of funding through various stakeholders.

Similarly, the finding of the study was supported by the findings of Onuka (2019) which revealed that funds available to Nigerian university cannot meet their needs because they are insufficient, so the university is, therefore, constrained to certain aspects of the expected expenditure, that appear to them to need urgent attention. They revealed further that various stakeholders agreed that the actual income of the universities fell short of their expectation. Thus, it is obvious that government is not adequately funding the university in Nigeria, hence the noticeable high level of rot in the system.

The findings of the study for research question 2 revealed that there is a high positive relationship between stakeholders role in staff recruitment and administration of public universities in Rivers State. This implies that stakeholders' performance of their roles in staff recruitment lead to more effective administration of public universities in Rivers State. This is in line with the findings of Henningson and Geschwind (2021) who carried out a study on stakeholders roles in recruitment of academic staff: An institutional logics perspective. It is found that academic recruitment in Swedish universities is situated in a tangle of different practices and ideals comprising six logics: state, academic, managerial, market, community and family. Heads of departments show that

recruitment practices are the result of several considerations where, for example, meritocracy, bureaucracy and loyalty do not always pull in the same direction. They revealed however, that the recruitment process considers stakeholders input and recommendations.

The findings of the study for research question 3 revealed that there is a high positive relationship between stakeholders role in provision of school facilities and administration of public universities in Rivers State. This indicates that stakeholders' performance of their roles in provision of school facilities lead to improved administration of public universities in Rivers State. This finding is in line with the findings of Adu-Baffoe and Bonney (2021) which showed that Action Aid as an NGO support activities to basic education delivery in Tamale Metropolis through provision of infrastructure development, provision of teaching and learning materials, capacity development of teachers, provide learning needs to students and school community sensitization. These activities have contributed to improved quality teaching and learning, enhanced the availability of teaching and learning materials. However, the support activities were inadequate to improve students' performances in Basic Education Certificate Examination. Similarly, Aprebo and Amaewhule (2018) in their study found out that TETFund facilities are utilized for infrastructural development in universities in Rivers and Bayelsa States. However, it was revealed some tribe or ethnic groups are priority in TETFund grant at the expense of other, Universities in Nigeria should also ensure that TETFund facilities are used for infrastructural development, and not for personal aggrandizement.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that there is a high and positive relationship between education stakeholders' roles and the administration of public universities in Rivers State. Education stakeholders have roles in funding of universities, staff recruitment and provision of school facilities. The consistency of stakeholders in actively carrying out these responsibilities leads to a corresponding improvement in the administration of public universities in Rivers State. There is, therefore, a high positive correlation between the two variables.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. University administration through its Public Relations Unit should come up with deliberate strategies on how to engage the various external stakeholders to increase funding of universities, as this will ensure easy administration of these universities and ultimately improve the quality of university education provided.
2. Federal and State governments as major stakeholders should ensure that their participation in staff recruitment in public universities should be within the limits of the provisions of the university laws. Too much interference in the recruitment process could compromise the standard of education provided in these schools.
3. Private organizations, including multinational companies, should deliberately extend their corporate social responsibilities to the provision of school facilities in public universities as this will enhance the quality of education provided and ease the administration of the universities.

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