



PROBLEMS POSED BY GOVERNING COUNCIL IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA UNIVERSITY

Adeniyi Temitope Adetunji

Business Administration Department, Bowen University Iwo, Nigeria.

Bashir Aboaba Mojeed-Sanni

School of Management, Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK.

ABSTRACT

This paper is design to investigate the role and position of governing council in the development of Nigeria university education. The paper uses a standard literature review to study university composition as it relates to the governing council. Deep attention is given to the development and composition of privately owned institution eclectically, those that have been graduating student in the last 7years. 7 universities were selected for the study, 5 major stakeholders who have direct involvement in the activities of university management were selected in each university (that is vice-chancellor, registrar and university lawyer). Qualitative approach that adopts a semi structure interview was assumed suitable for the study. The study outcome reveals that university management effort are sometimes affected by the decision of the governing council. The study reveals that university management development plan are influenced both positively and negatively by the governing council while university management finds it difficult to implement decisions they belief it will promote good practices, governing councils are sometimes in different to university management decision.

Keyboard: governing council, university, Nigeria, quality

Introduction.

Many universities have been established since the introduction of deregulation policy and privatization of university education in Nigeria, among which more than 50 universities have emerged between 2001 and 2015 (NUC 2015). In the structural composition of any university, there exist a main body called the governing council. Every institution be it public or private has their supreme decision-making body to be the governing council. This body (governing

council) is change with the major strategic development of the university. But, it is surprising that despite the existence of such body, Nigeria universities today are still faced with the question of whether or not they are providing a better service to the student. A lot of questions have been raised in literatures, especially those studying quality improvement in Nigeria universities. For instance, Juran (2000) provided a general answer to the question of quality education in universities; Adeogun and Gboyega (2010) asked what is quality; Obasi, Akuchie and Obasi (2010) question that quality is declining; Materu (2007) expressed that quality is a mix of different features; and Adetunji (2015b) queries that provision of quality education of the country universities continued, as there exists failure to provide undergraduates with basic facilities such as electric, poor road, lack of water and many more continue. Though it is established that management of any organization should take 90% of the blame in case of failure (Nobel, 2011), none of these quality questions have been answered by Nigeria Universities top management, regardless that Nigeria have continue to create access to university education and the demand for quality service increases daily. In a paper by Adetunji (2015) title quality issue, beyond university mgt. he queries the development of the university and established that the university management have a lot of work to do if the university will improve their quality provision. A gap in Adetunji (2015a)'s omission of the study is the fact that university management do not have the autonomy or power to function in isolation as they solely depend and act on the power vented on them by the governing council. In the development of university education literatures, (such as Ene, 2005; Fashina, 2005; Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009; Okechukwu & Okechukwu, 2011; Hauwa, 2012) they have mostly ignore or pay less attention to the governing council involvement in management and smooth running of university education. However it has been speculated that governing council member can be problematic in allowing the university management to function properly, especially in a privately owned institution where proprietors select or choice his/her council member based on relationship. Likewise in public university it have been generally observed that selection of governing council board are, most likely, politicised. Which then question the competence of individuals on the board. On few occasion universities have witness situation where there is conflicts of interest from what the governing council wants and stand for, against what the management perceived as right, in moving the university forward. However it is of high importance to get people who sat at both management and governing council meeting involve in the debate to clear some of the assumptions made earlier.

UNIVERSITY GOVERNING COUNCIL

Governing Council in universities, sometimes refer to as committees, are an integral part of Nigerian universities systems and structure. In a review, Oyewole (2009) pointed out that in

Nigerian there are all kinds of committees, some of which are known by different names, such as boards or even panels (whether panels, boards, or committees, they all perform very similar functions).

One important committee in any Nigeria university is the governing council. The council is the highest authority of the university and has full responsibility and control for the custody and disposition of all finances and property of the university. The chairman of the committee 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, 2002). Thus, there is a strong reflection of a constellation of interests of different key actors in each university, particularly in terms of quality management in relation to governing council involvement on university education development. It is also observed that because of the university management interests, power and academic autonomy, it is very difficult to have a common agreement when making decisions relating to matters of university policies, as mentioned in the introductory section. Hence, tensions are raised about the fact that quality management occurs differently in Nigerian universities.

Nevertheless, the Nigerian government still plays a central role in shaping the structure of the university systems, although other players also have their fingers in the pie. The government therefore demands accountability on the part of all Nigerian universities through the NUC, although it is now repositioning itself and forging new forms of relationships with Nigeria universities, by introducing different policies in order to continue to ensure some degree of harmony between national development goals and the operations of Nigerian universities (Ekundayo and Ajayi 2009; Dauda, 2010; Nakpodia, 2011).

Likewise, Adekola (2012) supported Obasi et al.'s (2010) findings that the Nigerian university system in today's context is nothing but crisis management. He highlighted several noticeable crises in Nigerian universities, which include financial crisis, deteriorated infrastructure, brain-drain syndrome, graduate unemployment, erosion of university autonomy, volatile and militant student unionism, secret cults and political interference, which have all affected the quality of education. Adekola identified that the majority of these problems can be drawn to a late or zero involvement of governing council member or over involvement in some cases. These debates have directed our attention to how quality has been managed in the mix of conflicting interests.

The Governing Council

The Nigeria university governing council is the most important committee of the institution, the council held very important roles in the development of the university, on most cases the success and failure of any university depend on how effective the committee member can administratively perform their function. Law enacted by Nigeria Parliament - the National Assembly, and signed into law on 10th July 2003 by President Olusegun Obasanjo constitutes the governing council as the most powerful organ of any university in Nigeria. The council was first vested power in 2003 and reviewed in 2007 under federal republic of Nigerian Official gazette No 10, volume 94 of 12th January 2007 as Act No1 of 2007. Although Nigeria University Commission dramatically retrieved the Act and made copy available to federal ministry of Education and its Agency.it was however observed that the Act No1 of 2003 is the same as in the principal Act, Degree No11 of 1993 with insignificant difference to the opening phrase “The council of any university shall consist of”, which change to the pro-chancellor, the vice-chancellor, his Deputy, representative of the following, Senate, Federal Ministry of Education, Convocation committee, congregation, External/ internal member. Any member of this council is expected to be knowledgeable and familiar with the affairs and tradition of the university, and must be of proven integrity. He must at less have gone through university system.

In addition to this composition, the council were charged with the responsibility of leadership by example, to protect all academic right, irrespective of religious ethnic or political affiliation. The council is charged with the responsibility to ensure fairness, discipline of staff as well as balance in recruitment, Respect the rule of law as well as follow due process, ensure budgetary control & monitoring, safe custodial of finance and properties. They are also to ensure compliance with government policies, separation of power, protest academic tradition, respect agreement, uphold quality in student admission and, finally, remain neutral in case of university management dispute with staff.

University Management in Nigeria

In Nigeria universities, the main key actors involved are students, non-teaching staff, teaching staff, government agencies, other funding agencies, accreditation bodies, employers, and the general community. These are agents that have direct influence on the university process. They all have their individual understandings of how quality management occurs, as suggested by (Hill, et al., 2003; Ogbogu, 2013). Amongst the aforementioned key actors, the most important groups are those who have an influence on the process, require results from the service or are directly involved in the process. Although Ishikawa (1990) claimed that quality is everyone's responsibility, but for the purpose of this study, attention will be paid

only to the university management and governing council. Therefore, the study will focus on the management who take responsibility for what transpires in the process of the university education system on a day-to-day basis.

The concentration on university management in this study is not to play down the importance of other external bodies, such as families of students, the government and society, who have genuine interests in university output. In fact, quality management models have stress their importance, motivation and commitment to the development of the system. Quality management models, as it relates to university education, has less discuss on the position of university governing council and management which has a greater influence on the overall system of the universities, such as admission criteria, teaching styles, methods and techniques, including an appropriate blend of factors such as classroom infrastructure and curriculum design. This justifies the reasons for their selection.

Likewise, it was observed that key actors' knowledge, skills, enthusiasm and teaching styles are fundamental to learning, as they control to a great degree the overall experiences and conclusion of university activities, as discussed in Hill et al. (2003). University management have certain practical knowledge, involvements and contributions as well as needs and expectations in relation to quality management and their implementation in the Nigerian context. In the work of Doherty (1994), she expressed that quality improvement is based on the principle that only those involved in carrying out a process are fully competent at measuring its features if the need to measure should arise. In principle, Oko (2011) revealed that the university education management of a country influences development, the life of the country and its economic growth. As a result, in developed countries, greater attention is being paid to how university management is assembled and managed (Kaul, 2010). In light of this, it is agreed that the university management of a country plays an important role in the overall development and outcome of the university (Ogbogu, 2013).

From the above, it is evident that efficient management of the university system is very important and has a vital bearing on how the quality of labour and manpower of the university are developed as well as on national economic growth (Peters, 2009). However, one can easily agree that the overall development of a nation is based on the fact that highly skilled manpower development of any country is ultimately developed and trained through the university management involvement, efforts and experiences (Ekundayo and Ajayi, 2009). In light of these facts, university management in Nigeria are seen as key factors for development, taking into consideration human input as an important aspect of management as well as the uniqueness of the institution structure in general (Akinyemi and Abiddin,

2013). Likewise, in their review, Wheelen and Hunger (2011) hypothesized that management includes the putting into practice of business objectives (such as mission and vision statement), with the purpose of realizing business gains as a result.

The term 'management' as it is related to university is commercial in nature. That is, when the word 'management' is applied in a setting like university, there must be an expectation of 'gains and profit', as management takes place in business for the single aim of profit survival and advancement (Wheelen and Hunger, 2011). Likewise, every business operates mainly for profitability and survival: therefore, a university as a centre of the business of human development strives to be well managed for the purpose of attaining its goals of the development and creation of relevant skills for the society, as well as profitability and survival. In light of this observation, researchers such as Dauda (2010); Smart and Paulsen (2011) have hypothesized that institutions of higher learning, including universities, are predominantly for the business of moulding people into useful skills and capacities for improvement at individual, organizational and national levels. In theory, the principle and practices of an institution of higher learning or a university are not expected to function for business gain or profit - as a matter of fact, universities are 'not for profit-making' (Oyewole, 2009, p. 324).

Simultaneously, Ekundayo and Ajayi (2009) and Okechukwu and Okechukwu (2011) stressed that university management efforts such as input (admission and recruitment), transformation (teaching, learning and research) and output (graduates, enterprise) are primarily aimed at increasing manpower development, survival, profits and gains, as well as avoiding wastage in terms of students' dropping out. In the context of this study, university management is not about material management to upturn monetary profits and gains, but the administration of available resources towards sustainable quality management to develop socioeconomic benefits for the country (Okechukwu and Okechukwu, 2011). On one hand, administration involves directing the day-to-day activities of the university towards achieving its mission and vision statements, or resetting objectives, goals and the formulation of policies (Akinyemi and Abiddin, 2013, p. 227). On the other hand, from whichever way one looks at the process towards efficiency, the process of control in the university is either from the method of administration or from the technique of management, which primarily involves the effort of administrators, who are also referred to in this study as university management. Administration should be used to ensure quality for the purpose of efficient manpower output and adequate development for the country (Okechukwu and Okechukwu, 2011).

Methodology

This paper was design to study the involvement of government council in the university development especially the private owned institution. The paper assumed that if the governing council member are involve in the study, they may become very defensive. Some may likely not want to get involve which will jeopardize the intention of the study. Therefore, the paper uses a purposive selection procedure to select 5 participants who sat on a regular meeting of the governing council, they are Deputy Vice-chancellor, registrar, 3 senate representative. The involvement and centre roles play by these selected informants were very important and was assumed suitable for investigating what happen and the roles the governing council member plays in the development of university. The use of interviews as the sole research instrument was assumed appropriate because it allow the participants to express themselves anonymously without identifying who they are, or which institution they represent. The interview section engaged the participants and, to best of their knowledge, they were able to uncover few issues going on within the council. The study cover 8 universities, some privately owned universities claim to have a busy schedule and every efforts make them involved in the study proves abortive.

The universities selected were assigned numbers from 1 to 7 based on category (see Table 1) where Deputy vice-chancellor are represented by DVC, registrar by Reg, Senate representatives where selected based on their position of authorities. The first representative was chairman of all professors, second was the chairman of all deans and third was the university Librarian. A = Deputy vice-chancellor; B = registrar; C = Senate representative 1; D = Senate representative 2; E = Senate representative 3. Thus A1 to A6 = deputy vice-chancellor; B1 to B6 = registrar, E1 to E6 = senate representative 3.

Table 1

S/ N	Owners	Participants				
		Deputy Vice- chancellor r (DVC)	Registra r (Reg)	Senate Representativ e (SR 1)	Senate Representativ e (SR 2)	Senate Representativ e (SR 3)
1	Denominatio n	*	-	*	*	*
2	Investment	*	*	*	*	-
3	Enterprises	-	*	*	*	*
4	Sole- proprietorshi p	*	*	-	*	*
5	Society	*	*	*	*	*
6	State	*	-	*	*	*
7	Federal	*	*	*	*	*

Findings

In finding out the problems posed by governing council in the development of Nigeria Universities, the respondents debated on many issues but share similarities on seven major themes as problem created in the delivery of governing council and its member duty. Few respondent were of the view that governing council should not be taken for granted and its composition must be consider without prejudice since the success of any university rest solely on the performances of the chairman of the council and the vice-chancellor. (A2, A7, B4, C1, D2). However the themes that emerged from the discussion was as follows

Non-graduate elected/ Nominated: With the entire participant from a private university. It was echo that many of the university owners now appoint and nominate candidate or council members without a first degree to sit on decision making of the university (B2, B4, C7). A respondent lamented,

‘I am not surprised that privately owned university are nominating non-graduated as member of their council because of the position relationship they possessed with the owner’ (A4).

Relationship and friendship are very common in today's business especially in the business of profit oriented knowing that university education is not one of such business and any attempt to replicate the business methodology in the university operation can jeopardized the purpose of establishing university education (D1, D2, E7). One of the respondents express that,

I have talk about these that is nominating friend as governing council member as one of the problem private university are facing. Don't forget that the proprietor is the business owner, the business owner will always want support from anybody who sit on the council, as it is the final decision taking body for any university. Therefore, they want a say and when they need to vote on any issues they want majority (A5).

Another respondent expressed that even my vice-chancellor; he will not allow just anybody from the senate, but someone loyal to him to represent the senate at the council meeting.

I think we as academics, have been very unfair in the ways and manner we accept bad practices, especially in allowing those who do not share the same belief with us, who do not undergo the same training with us in deciding the future of the business' (A7).

In an attempt to clear or get more information on how the nominations are carried out, a registrar said,

I am the secretary to the council, I am loyal to my vice-chancellor and chairman of the council but to be honest with you, the process of nominating a council member is always is full of many thing outside academic purpose' (B7).

Question of Integrity

Few of the respondent agreed that integrity is key factor for choosing who should be a governing council member. Although privately established universities sometime claims to abide to this key criteria in selecting council member but one of the respondent expressed that,

I have observed over the time is that, the owner or founder of any private university will like to nominate someone who can donate or give fund to the university as a member of the council not minding the source of such money' (D1).

A respondent lamented what integrity will you as a university owner be looking for when you get a free sum of 10 – 20 million support from a political who request that he want to be a governing council member.

I think, in today's Nigeria nobody care about integrity, money come first, then every other thing can be managed' (EA).

The questions of integrity were also maintained by senate representatives especially from state and federal university. They expressed that in public schools no one know who is appointed as governing council member government is the owner of the university and either federal or state government decide who is a governing council member (C1, C3, D2, D5, E1, E4)

'I think in most cases the position is honorary to political office holder's friend, or party member who has contributed, probably financially, to the party' (E1).

Another respondent expressed that,

'I believe most of the proprietors do not know the duties and responsibility of a governing council member' (D2).

No wonder one of the representative stated that even from the first day of nomination to the end of the term of office you may not even see a council member at a meeting (B3). Although a deputy vice-chancellor argued that university in Nigeria are very keen on who sit on the council meeting. He express further.

'I must be sincere with you, we are keen about council member's integrity, even though principal officers cannot decide who is going to be a council member. But because we are keen about providing quality service, our Dean and director represent the university internally while other decision are followed based on statutory' (A1).

Undue Interference of Government

Few respondent were of the view that governing council does not operate in isolation; they also receive direction from the government in term of public university and from founder/owner or proprietors in term of private university. Two senate representative expressed that, even though lot of important people sat at the governing council meeting, we all operate with lesser power or authority, yes we got right to vote, right to make suggestion, but the final decision can still be influence by government or ownership interference (C6, D4). One of the senate representative expressed further that;

'Take for example, when the governing council wants to embark on a project and tender, and a certain member of the governing council is interested in the contract then the position of the governing will be compromise. In expense of the governors decision' (D4).

Conclusion

The role and influence of governing councils in Nigeria universities has been either ignored or grossly understated, especially as it relates to improvement the quality of both input (that is, recruitment of faculty staff, student admission criterion and recruitment of administrative

and student pastoral matters staffs) and output (mainly, quality of graduates and continue professional development of academic and learning facilities and infrastructures) resources to the university system. The composition of members of university governing council in most Nigeria universities have been fret with issues not too distance to corruption and indiscipline. It was observe from this study that nepotism, favoritism, political interference, and outright disregard to extant regulations has been the bane of quality issues in Nigeria universities. This study found as worrisome, the fact that these problems associated with the composition of university governing councils in Nigeria has no boundary, as both privately owned and public owned universities engages in acts detrimental to improving the quality of university education in Nigeria. Undue government interference in the composition and discharge of universities governing councils is another major issue affecting the role of governing councils in ensuring quality in Nigeria university education.

It is the view of this study that Nigeria University Commission (NUC) need to, not only brace up on its responsibilities, and beam its search light on the composition of universities governing councils. Particular attention should be paid to character and integrity of each members of the council. This study infer that laws establishing and ascribing final decision making on universities governing councils should be amended or review with a view to ensuring quality of members and provision of a check and balance mechanism for the decisions made by these councils.

Reference

- Adekola, B. (2012). The Role of Status in Job Satisfaction Level of Academic staff in Nigerian Universities. *International Journal of Management and Business Affairs*, 2(1), 1-10.
- Adeogun, A. A., and Gboyega G. I. (2010). Declining quality of Nigerian university graduates: Revitalizing quality assurance through foreign agencies' support US-China Education Review Department of Educational Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Lagos, Lagos Nigerian, 7(6), 45-53.
- Adetunji, A. T. (2015a). University Management Perspective of Quality: A review of Nigerian universities. *Net Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(1), 1-8.
- Adetunji, A. T. (2015b). Quality in Nigerian Universities: The Perceptions of Students from Public and Privately-owned Institutions, *Ge-international journal of management research*, 3(8), 116-129.
- Akinyemi, G. M. & Abiddin, N. Z. (2013). Quality Administration and Management in Higher Education in Nigeria: Implications for Human Resource Development. *International Education Studies*, 6(4), 225-235.

- Dauda, R. O. S. (2010). Investment in Education and Economic Growth in Nigeria: An Empirical Evidence. *International Research Journal of Finance and Economics*, 55, 158- 169.
- Ekundayo, H. T. & Ajayi, I. A. (2009). Towards effective management of university education in Nigeria. *International NGO journal*, 4(8), 342-347.
- Ene, A. C. (2005). 'Access and equity in university education in Nigeria: issues and trends', in G. O. Akpa, S. U. Udoh and E. O. Fagbamiye (eds), *Deregulating the Provision and Management of Education in Nigeria*. Nigerian Association of Educational Administration and Planning (NAEAP), pp. 55–62.
- Fashina, D. (2005). Reforms in Nigeria University System: What Direction? *National Freedom* 1(6), 9-12.
- Hauwa, I. (2012). 'Educational policy in Nigeria from the colonial era to the post-independence period', *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, (1): 181–204.
- Hill, Y., Lomas, L. and Macgregor, J. (2003). Students' perceptions of quality in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 11(1), 15-20.
- Kaul, J. N. (2010). Higher education, social change and national development. [Online]. Available at <http://14.139.58.196:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/169> [Accessed 11 September 2013].
- Materu, P. (2007). Higher education quality assurance in sub-Saharan Africa: status, challenges, opportunities and promising practices (Washington, DC, World Bank).
- Nakpodia, E. (2011). Team Management as an Effective Technique for the Management of Schools in Nigeria. *African Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(1), 83-91.
- Nobel, C. (2011). 'Why Companies Fail- and how their founders can bounce back'. *Harvard Business School Working Knowledge: The Thinking that Leads*. Online <http://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/why-companies-failand-how-their-founders-can-bounce-back>. Accessed 16/09/2015.
- Obasi, I. N., Akuchie, R. C., and Obasi, S. N. (2010). Expansion of Higher Education Access through Private Universities in Nigeria (1999-2009): A Decade of Public Policy Failure?", Paper presented at a National Conference on Education for Nation Building and Global Competitiveness, organized by NERDC at the International Conference Centre, Abuja.
- Okechukwu, F. C. & Okechukwu, F. C. (2011). Total Quality Management in Higher Education: Symbolism Or Substance? a Close Look at the Nigerian University System. [Online]. <http://books.google.com.my/books?hl=en&dlr=andid=IA> [Accessed 11 July 2015].
- Oko, R. O. (2011). Toward transforming Nigerian universities for quality education: The need for Nigerian universities professors' forum (Nov, 14). [Online]. Available at <http://newsdiaryonline.com/professor.htm#sthash.07DodxH4.dpuf> [Accessed 12 November 2013].

Oyewole, O. (2009). Internationalization and its implications for the quality of higher education in Africa. *Higher Education Policy*, 22(3), 319-329.

Peters, A. A. (2009). Population and Human Resource Development in Nigeria. lecture delivered at the National Defence College. Abuja Nigeria to Participants of Course, 18(7). [Online]. Available at <http://www.ndc.gov.ng/Lectures/Population-and-HRD.pdf> [Accessed 12 September 2013].