LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES FACING TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: A CASE STUDY OF LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Management of education in Nigeria has been constrained with many challenges and higher education faces its fair share of problems among which leadership challenges is prominent. This research therefore becomes necessary in view of the need to improve the leadership of tertiary institutions, which of course has now become a major priority for government reformation agenda. To achieve this aim, this research study investigates leadership challenges facing tertiary institutions using Lagos state of Nigeria as a case study. The quantitative research methodology was adopted and the research utilized both primary and secondary sources of data collection. While the primary source of data collection was derived through self-structured survey questionnaire administered to fifty-five (55) participants from each of the two (2) purposively selected tertiary institutions within the study area, summing up the total of one hundred and ten (110) participants. The secondary sources focused on journals and textbooks relevant to the research topic. Data analysis was carried out using Chi-square method of analysis. It was concluded that higher education in Nigeria will only be central and globally relevant if the true tradition of what it represents as knowledge factories is engendered and maintained through a process of consistent preparation of the academic trainees of today for effective leadership. The study recommends that leadership styles in tertiary institutions should be inclusive to give recognition to the complexity of academic institutions. Also, the researcher recommends a credible governance and leadership structured in such a way that allows participation by all stakeholders.

Keywords: *Leadership, Higher Education, Higher institutions, Challenges. Vice Chancellors, Lagos State, Governance, National Universities Commission (NUC) and Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

There are diverse philosophies behind the idea of establishment of tertiary institutions in world over (Soaib & Hussin, 2012), but for the purpose of clarity, the tertiary institution is the pinnacle of an educational system in any society where the citizens are trained for socio-economic and political growth of the particular nation (Online Britannica, 2017). The high level manpower being trained and graduated are the likes of medical doctors, pharmacist, engineers, teachers and other categories of personnel for every market economy.

In order to achieve this important national objective of human capital development as well as its consequential growth and development of the nation, the Nigerian government unequivocally spelt out the goals of tertiary education in the 6th Edition (2013) of National Policy

on Education (NPE) published by Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), 2013 by stating the following;

i.   Contribute to National development through high level manpower training;
ii. Provide accessible and affordable quality learning opportunities in formal and informal education in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians;
iii. Provide high quality career counselling and lifelong learning programmes that prepare students with the knowledge and skills for self-reliance and the working world;
iv. Reduce skill shortage through the production of skilled manpower relevant to the needs of the labour market;
v.   Promote and encourage scholarship, entrepreneurship and community service;
vi. Forge and cement national unity and
vii. Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

It is therefore important to say that these enormous aforementioned goals cannot be guaranteed without the active involvement of tertiary institutions' management bodies which form the leadership of the institutions. The academic leadership in question is the type of leadership as described by Nwankwo, (2014) as a leadership that is provided by senior academic and administrative leaders with the particular focus on creating conducive environment for personal academic growth and institution development within the tertiary institutions. It is also a type of leadership that includes roles such as creating vision and mission based on science and research data for the organization, setting up creative ideas, as well as doing and providing teamwork. The work of this academic leadership is so enormous that it has broad capability and functions across a higher education institution, reflected in leadership of governance in both corporate, academic and in operations. This indicates that the task of creating vision and mission inadvertently rests on the principal administrator of the tertiary institutions which could either be Vice Chancellor, Rector or Provost depending on the status of the tertiary institutions (Fayemi, 2012).

The Principal administrator of any tertiary institution is expected to be equipped with effective leadership skills in order to properly run it and to achieve its set objectives. However, there has been a decline in the standards of the tertiary institutions as well as its eventual decay and rot (NBS, 2012; Nwankwo, 2014; Imogie, 2014; Ofoegbu & Alonge, 2016).

The former President of Federal Republic of Nigeria; President Olusegun Obasanjo lamented the situation of Nigeria tertiary institutions and proffers that "Nigeria's higher institutions can achieve their core aim to contribute to national development through high level manpower training, if we get the issue of leadership, governance, development and the promotion of values which remains our culture, right (Premium Time, 2015)". Until Nigeria got the issue of leadership, development, governance and values right, higher institutions in the country would not be ranked among the best in the world (Ogunruku, 2012).

Mismanagement, being one of the leadership challenges, has caused the problems we are facing in the country today. One would wonder why we have close to 200 universities in the country without effective manpower training to make it functional and efficient (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2018). The questions are how, where, why, when and what have the education stakeholders done to make Nigerian tertiary institutions achieve the manpower training needed for Nigeria to move forward coupled with the fact that the Nigerian universities still source for manpower outside the country?

Inadequate funding and grants to tertiary institutions, bad leadership and governance among others are some of the factors that impede the goals of tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Imogie, 2014). Therefore, there is a daring need for a paradigm shift on the part of tertiary institutions to produce intellectual elites that would bring the desired change to not only ensure good leadership style but spurned economic and political growth in Nigeria.

Prof. Abubakar Rasheed, the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission (NUC), in one of its annual conferences submits that, "Social instability in Nigeria has resulted from a history of bad governance and the insensitivity of governments to the living conditions of the citizenry which in turn affects tertiary institutions' leadership style" (NUC, 2019). An urgent challenge for the immediate future is to get our tertiary institutions to do what they can do best, create a national elite that would facilitate the emergence of truly internationally acceptable standard tertiary institutions with the aid of demonstrating good sense of leadership (Imogie, 2014).

The dreams of our founding fathers in setting up tertiary institutions in Nigeria have failed through different challenges of parochial, sectional and regressive forces that have worked against its unity and nationhood. It is sad to say that tertiary education institutions are, tragically, yet to be the incubators of national growth and development (FGN, 2017; NUC, 2019). A cursory look at the ranking parameter differs depending on the ranking organization. For example, the Webometric laboratory bases their rankings on the commitment of institutions to web publication (Webometric Report, 2019). The Times Higher Education-QS based their rankings on many factors, amongst which are a peer review of collected data, library holdings, academic and research performance, funding, international activities of the institution, etc. (Okebukola, 2008; Koko, 2010). Unfortunately, most Nigerian universities are inadequately funded, lacks basic infrastructural and material resources to meet the requirements for global rankings. Nigerian tertiary institutions are clearly disadvantaged and will continue to rank low in global rankings if nothing tangible is done to ameliorate the present state of affairs. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate leadership challenges facing tertiary institution in Nigeria using two purposively selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State, Nigeria as a case study.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Tracing down the history of education during and after the nation's independence, there were indications of types of schools within the stated period and political involvement in the issues pertaining to management, leadership and students which resulted in eventual decay and gradual reduction in academic standards as well as the evaluation system. However, the realities today show that tertiary institutions, rather than improving their status as being the manpower for exponential economic development, have become hubs for tribalism, nepotism, marginalization and mediocrity etc. (Wokocha, 2008).

Many concerned citizens have written on the educational system with particular reference to tertiary institutions (Coyle, 2004; Adeniyi, 2008; Egwu, 2009; Fayemi, 2012; Scott & McKellar, 2012; Ogunruku, 2012) and attributed its deploying conditions to poor implementation of curriculum, inadequate funding and poor monitoring or supervision, quota system and godfathers, which adversely affect educational leadership of the country, while others see the challenges facing tertiary institutions to be more of leadership problem. The research studies so far have not been able to answer some salient questions regarding leadership attitude: Should lecturers be allowed to skip classes? Why should students get to class, and the lecturer not come? Why should it take months to mark scripts and release results? Why should students graduate and wait for a long time before getting their transcripts? Why should obtaining transcripts, which ordinarily should be taken for granted, be a multi-task as sometimes when students apply for a transcript, it might take months, and even years? These are leadership-oriented issues that must be addressed, hence the study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate leadership challenges in tertiary institutions in Nigeria using purposively selected tertiary institutions in Lagos State as a case study. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

i. investigate the leadership quality of tertiary institutions in Nigeria;

ii. examine students' perception of academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria;

ii. investigate teacher's perception of Nigerian tertiary institutions' leadership quality in tertiary institutions in Nigeria;

iv. examine the relationship between leadership quality and academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested in the study:

Ho1:   There is no significant leadership quality of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Ho2:   There is no significant students' perception of academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Ho3:   There is no significant teacher's perception of Nigerian tertiary institutions' leadership quality in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Ho4:   There is no significant relationship between leadership quality and academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was adopted in this study. The target population for this study consists of all the lecturers and undergraduate students in the Department of Educational Management from the tertiary institutions in Lagos State. Two (2) tertiary institutions were purposively selected within the location of the study. However, undergraduate students were used in the study for survey questionnaire, while five (5) lecturers from the Department of Educational Management in the selected tertiary institutions were also considered for questionnaire administration. Lecturers and the students of the Department of Educational Management were considered for this study because the study seeks to investigate their respective perceptions of the leadership quality as well as academic standards of the tertiary institutions in Lagos state. The total number of one hundred and ten (110) respondents which made up of 100 undergraduate students and 10 lecturers from the Department of Educational Management of the tertiary institutions were randomly selected as sample for this study. The instruments used in this study for the collection of data from the respondents was a self-designed questionnaire structured of 4-Likert scale; Strongly Agree (A), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) in order to measure leadership challenges facing tertiary institutions in Lagos State. The questionnaire was given to two (2) experts in the Educational Management Department for content and construct validation. It was therefore subjected to test re-test method of analysis to establish its reliability co-efficient. The reliability of the instrument was carried out outside the area of the study. It was subjected to analysis using Cronbach's alpha to determine the reliability and reliability coefficient of 0.79 was ascertained, which was found to be consistent. Chi-square statistical method of analysis was used to test the four stated hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

Test of Hypothesis

Ho 1:   There is no significant leadership quality of tertiary institutions in Nigeria

Table 1: Analysis Showing Respondents' Response with Remarks for Hypothesis I

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Calculated X^2	D.F	Critical Val.	Remarks
Principal Administrators motivate the staff in different ways	30	40	25	15				
Principal Administrators take feedback proactively from the people they lead	45	35	15	15				
Principal Administrators in my institution hold themselves accountable	50	40	10	10	205.72	12	5.226	Hypothesis rejected
There is strong communication system between the Principal Administrators and the people they lead.	25	45	30	10				
My institution's Principal Administrators have good decision-making process	60	35	5	10				

Decision Rule

The table above indicates that the calculated Chi-square of 205.72 is significantly greater than the table value of 5.226 at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 12. The hypothesis I which states that "there is no significant leadership quality of tertiary institutions in Nigeria" was therefore rejected. The alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is significant leadership quality of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Hypothesis II

There is no significant students' perception of academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Table 2: Response with Remarks for Hypothesis II

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Calculated X^2	D.F	Critical Val.	Remarks

In my institution, quality is the key ingredient for success to achieve student satisfaction in academic services.	45	35	15	15	204.47	12	5.226	Hypothesis is rejected
Students are able to interrelate with one another and several non-academic individual constituents within the institution.	30	55	20	5				
In my institution, the quality of the academic services received is profoundly acceptable.	60	30	5	15				
My school ensure quality of service measurements on the student's gratification level which form their perception about the institution.	35	55	15	5				
The Administrators of my Institution ensure that curriculum is judiciously covered and adhered to.	28	42	25	15				

Decision Rule

Table above indicates that the calculated Chi-square of 204.47 is significantly greater than the table value of 5.226 at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 12. The hypothesis II which states that "there is no significant students' perception of academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria" was rejected. The alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is significant students' perception of academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Hypothesis III

There is no significant teacher's perception of Nigerian tertiary institutions' leadership quality in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Table 3: **Respondents' Response with Remarks for Hypothesis III**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Calculated X^2	D.F	Critical Val.	Remarks
The Principal Administrator in my institution has a way of motivating lecturers, staff, and students.	15	30	55	10				
The relationship between the Principal Administrator in my institution and all the lecturers are cordial and good.	20	25	40	25				
The leadership style being practised by the Principal Administrator in my institution encourages staff teamwork and collaborative problem-solving.	30	20	45	15	94.83	12	5.226	Hypothesis is rejected
The Principal Administrator in my institution treats each of us as an individual with different needs, abilities, and aspirations than others.	25	18	57	10				
The Principal Administrator in my institution makes me feel proud to be among the lecturers in the institution.	10	12	58	30				

Decision Rule

Table above indicates that the calculated Chi-square 0f 94.83 is significantly greater than the table value of 5.226 at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 12. The hypothesis III which states that there is no significant teacher's perception of Nigerian tertiary institutions' leadership quality in tertiary institutions in Nigeria" was rejected. The alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is significant teacher's perception of Nigerian tertiary institutions' leadership quality in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Hypothesis IV

There is no significant relationship between leadership quality and academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Table 4: Respondents' Response with Remarks for Hypothesis IV

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Calculated X^2	D.F	Critical Val.	Remarks
There is commitment by the Principal Administrator to ensure that all students have opportunities to succeed.	5	10	45	50				
The institution's management holds themselves accountable for teaching, learning, and student performance.	10	5	45	50	45.16	12	5.226	Hypothesis is rejected
The institution management incorporate a wide range of leadership skills and styles to direct the institution toward achieving common goals and possessing a well-directed, clear vision.	8	10	45	47				
The institution management conforms	10	15	25	60				

to the existing organizational structure of the institution, and measures success according to the institution's system of rewards and penalties.							
The institution's management possesses great ability to influence organizational commitment by promoting values related to accomplishing goals.	5	5	60	40			

Decision Rule

Table above indicates that the calculated Chi-square of 45.16 is significantly greater than the table value of 5.226 at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 12. The hypothesis IV which states that "there is no significant relationship between leadership quality and academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria" was rejected. The alternative hypothesis is accepted which means that there is significant relationship between leadership quality and academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data collected for this study were based on the responses obtained from the modified questionnaire. They were analysed in line with the focus of the research hypotheses which were formulated in the design of the study. According to the outcome from Table 1, Hypothesis I which states that "There is no significant leadership quality of tertiary institutions in Nigeria" was rejected, because the researcher was able to find out that there is statistically significant leadership quality of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This is supported by Adekeye (2018) when he studied the trend in growth of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. He went further to state how Federal universities grew in number and students' enrolment increased, as well as state universities which started emerging in 1979 with the Rivers State University of Science and Technology taking the lead. In the same vein, the emergence of private providers of university education in Nigeria became a reality when the first three private universities, namely, Igbinedion University, Okada, Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo and Madonna University, Okija, were licensed to operate in 1999 after an earlier failed attempt. The Nigerian tertiary education system has witnessed tremendous growth as there has been a significant increase in the number of higher educational

institutions, thereby creating a wider access to the ever-increasing population of young Nigerians (Komolafe, 2019). If an insight is taken into the research, one would observe that some tertiary institutions have started providing the dividends of their establishment in terms of breakthrough research, technology transfer, as well as solving economic problems and challenges faced by the country. For example, Redeemer's University, a private University established by the Redeemed Christian Church of God, is one of the World Bank African Centres of Excellence in the area of genomics of infectious diseases. The centre played a prominent role in fighting and curtailing Ebola virus in 2014 and Lassa Fever in 2016 due to the leadership quality exhibited in all their decision makings (Tomori, 2018).

Based on the data obtained from the respondents, Hypothesis II which states that "there is no significant students' perception of academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria" was rejected due to the findings obtained in Table 2 shows that the calculated value of 204.47 was greater than the critical value of 5.226 at 0.05 alpha level. This is supported by Ferreira and Santoso (2008) who opined that a student's perception of the learning process is directly correlated with their attitude and academic performance which is the direct output of the institution performance. The study of undergraduate students' expectations of various aspects of quality of lecturers that they have coupled with the value of teaching access has become prominent for some time now (Wilson & Simons, 2002; Ferreira & Santoso, 2008; Komolafe, 2019). As education is a dynamic human activity, it is obvious that students, being the end users of the academic community, would be able to provide important and verifiable insights derived from their experiences in the classroom. To this end, students' perception of academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is positive, though they still believe there is a lot to be done. Students are the direct beneficiary of the academic activities within the tertiary institutions (Ofoegbu & Alonge, 2016; NUC, 2019). These factors constantly interact in the school environment and therefore determine how good or bad a student rate his/her academic institutions (Egwu, 2009). Numerous explanations for the dimensions of student satisfaction exist. For example, Parameswaran and Glowacka (2015) looked at elements such as events that are outside of the curriculum and course quality. It was also pointed out by Peng et al. (2012), that students are clients or customers, and the providers of education are required to give them priority and meet their expectations.

From data analysed based on testing of the null, Hypothesis III which states that "there is no significant teacher's perception of Nigerian tertiary institutions' leadership quality in tertiary institutions in Nigeria" was rejected. Various institutions of higher learning in Nigeria are constantly faced with industrial action, either by the Academic or Non-Academic Staff Union of the institutions. Most of these strike actions are caused by disagreement between the government and the unions of these institutions, arising from non-implementation or partial implementation of former agreements reached. The disagreement between government and academic community often results in deadlock that usually disrupts academic calendar which ultimately affects tertiary institutions' academic excellence. All these misunderstandings culminate the teacher's perception of leadership quality in tertiary institution. It is the way the staff of tertiary institutions was able to assess these institutions that causes disruption in academic activities and invariably affects the academic performance of the tertiary institutions (FGN, 2017). Table 3 shows that the calculated value of 94.83 was greater than the table value of 5.226 at significant level of 0.05 which invalidates the Hypothesis III, hence the alternate hypothesis which states that "there is significant teacher's perception of Nigerian tertiary institutions' leadership quality in tertiary institutions in Nigeria" was accepted.

Finally, the findings obtained from the analysis of Hypothesis IV which states that "there is no significant relationship between leadership quality and academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria" revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis which states that "there is a significant relationship between leadership quality and academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria" was accepted. This is in conformity with the

submission of Professor Adekeye, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Redeemer's University, a private University established by the Redeemed Christian Church of God who states that Redeemer's University became one of the World Bank African Centres of Excellence in the area of genomics of infectious diseases due to its leadership effectiveness which culminates the institution to become a World Bank centre where diseases like Ebola virus in 2014 and Lassa Fever in 2016 were fought and curtailed (Adekeye, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there is a significant level of quality of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Equally, a significant relationship exists between students' perceived rating of academic excellence in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and its academic excellence, as well as a significant relationship between staff assessment of Nigerian tertiary institutions' leadership compliance and Federal Government benchmark on minimum academic standards in tertiary institutions in Nigeria and a significant relationship exists between leadership effectiveness and academic excellence in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

In conclusion, for individuals to be effective leaders, they need to see themselves as leaders who are able to influence, effect and drive change within their organization; a leader who is willing to act as advocates for the change the project is attempting to achieve; a leader that has an interest in the key issue that they can clearly articulate; the leader must show a commitment to the ideals of the project as well as have leadership skills to encourage and engage others in the change process. This is essential in creating tertiary institutions that respect difference and where everybody, whether Nigerian or non-Nigerian can be safe, secured as well as feel wanted and where they can interact. This is the beginning of the solution to the leadership problems facing tertiary institutions in Nigeria and a reference point if we want to continue to have a nation; a country that prosper and can help us realise our dreams of genuine nationhood.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1.   Government should organize periodic conferences, seminars, and workshops to enable the leaders of tertiary institutions to interact and update themselves on how to run an all-inclusive administration.

2.   Federal Government should jettison the idea of Federal quota system when appointing leadership in tertiary institutions to encourage appointment of the best and competent administrators in charge of our tertiary institutions. Through this, academic excellence and tertiary institutions that are globally relevant will be guaranteed.

3.   Leadership styles in higher institutions should be an all-encompassing one that will give recognition to the complexity of the institutions.

4. The Nigerian tertiary institutions' leadership must strive to improve their quality output using Federal Government Agencies' standards as their benchmark in order to attain academic excellence.

5.   There is a need for credible governance and leadership structured in such a way that allows participation by all stakeholders.

The challenges that bedevilled tertiary institutions in Nigeria are well known and may not be completely erased or corrected in a paper such as this. All stakeholders in the education industry including academic workers must continue to play individual roles at all levels until the educational desires of our founding fathers are achieved.

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