Towards Effective Administration of Universities in South–South States of Nigeria: Facility Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

The study examined facility issues and challenges confronting administrative effectiveness of universities in the South-South Nigeria. A correlational research design was utilized in the study. Four research questions guided the conduct of the study. Three null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used in the selection of sample for the study. A validated questionnaire was administered on 1200 sample of university administrators purposively drawn across the six states of Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers, Edo and Delta, making up the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria. A reliability index of 0.85 was established for the study. Statistical analysis involved the use of mean, standard deviation and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The findings indicated that students' accommodation, library facilities and instructional resources posed major challenges to administrative effectiveness of universities in the geopolitical zone. A further analysis indicated that the extent of relationship of these facilities with administrative effectiveness of universities varied. While the relationship between student accommodation and administrative effectiveness of universities was not significant that of instructional resources and library facilities tested significant at 0.05 level of significance .The study concluded that improved infrastructural resources in the areas of library facilities and instructional resources could facilitate the administrative effectiveness of universities. It recommended among others that university management should explore private sector partnership initiatives to enhance the infrastructural base of universities in South-South Nigeria.

Keywords: Effective, Administration, Universities, Facility, Issues, Challenges.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

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INTRODUCTION

Education is widely seen as a major instrument for promoting socio-economic, political and cultural developments in Nigeria. Universities educate future leaders and develop high calibre technical capacities that underpin economic growth and development (Ajayi & Ayodele, 2004). Moreover, Ibukun (1997) noted that the main relevance of university education in Nigeria is the provision of manpower to drive the socio-economic development of the nation. According to the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014), higher education is expected to:

- Contribute to national development through high level 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 environment;
- 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;
- Promote national and international understanding and interaction.

Arising from the above, Ajayi and Ekandayo (2009) observed that funds allocated to higher education should not be seen as a mere expenditure, but a long-term investment to society at large. These benefits can be seen on a societal level in terms of lower unemployment rates and many others. Similarly, Odia and Omofonmuran (2007) and Wood (1980) opined that successful development entails more than investing in physical capital, but entails acquiring and using knowledge as well as bridging the gaps in knowledge. Hence, to successfully confront the challenges of development, a developing nation such as Nigeria should undertake three major tasks as follows:

- Acquire and adapt global knowledge and create knowledge locally;
- Invest in human capital to increase the ability to absorb and use knowledge;
- Invest in technologies to facilitate both acquisition and absorption of knowledge (Ochuba, 2001).

In spite of the enormous benefits of university education to nation building, the potentials of university system in developing nations to meet its relevance is frequently disrupted by long standing problems bedeviling the system. As Ajayi and Ayodele (2004) rightly noted higher education in Nigeria is in travail. They maintained that higher education system is riddled with crises of various dimensions. Thus, a number of multi-faceted challenges have slowed down goal attainment and raising question that suggests that university education is at a crisis point. The lots of university education in Nigeria today have largely been a story of mixed tales. These institutions initially laid claims in making relevant impact in the socio-political and economic developments of Nigeria, but today the story is hardly the same (Ekundayo & Ajayi, 2009). The implication is that university administration in Nigeria is presently facing numerous challenges. Some of the noticeable challenges are in the areas of inadequate funding, deteriorated infrastructure, brain drain syndrome and erosion of university autonomy (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2009; Ibara, 2016; Akindutire, 2004).

Administrative effectiveness is usually measured through the performance of tasks designated for institutional heads. Mgbekem (2004) classify the administrative tasks of school administrators under school community relationships, curriculum and instruction, pupil personnel, staff personnel, physical facilities, finance and business management. The work of university administrators can also be grouped as maintenance, critical and professional functions. It is observed that Vice Chancellors perform their duties in a cultural setting (Oyeneye, 2006). In other words, what a Vice Chancellor does in relation to the task of university administration may be determined to a large extent by environmental and other factors such as location of the university staff, student population, quantity and quality of staff, experience of the Vice Chancellor and certain characteristics that may be personal to him. Ehiametalor (2001) observed that the university administrator performs four major tasks requiring corresponding skills. These tasks are managing business; leading of people; curriculum development, and acting as a change agent. The respective skills required for performing the listed tasks are grouped under technical-managerial, human managerial, and technical-educational.

Statement of the Problem

University enrolments in Nigeria have skyrocketed while funding is decreasing, making the quality of teaching and learning questionable. The very large number of students admitted carries with them new challenges to university administrators. The near explosion in student enrolment implies large class size, more seats, more lecture halls, more halls of residence, more laboratories and workshops. Inadequate material resources provision for effective teaching, learning and research activities appears prevalent. These and more appears to be the common problems and challenges facing university administration in Nigeria. Considering these challenges on campuses, this study sought to investigate how these challenges relates to effectiveness of university administration in South-South Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined the relationship between issues in facility challenges and effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria. Specifically the objectives sought to determine:

- Facility challenges that influence administrative effectiveness of universities in South-South Nigeria;
- How challenges in students' accommodation relate to effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria;
- How challenges in instructional resources relate to effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria;
- How challenges in library facilities relate to effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the challenges confronting administrative effectiveness of universities in South-South states of Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between challenges in students' hostel accommodation and effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between challenges in instructional resources and effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between challenges in library facilities and effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria?

Hypotheses

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

- Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between challenges in students' hostel accommodation and effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria.
- Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between challenges in instructional resources and effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria.
- Ho_3: There is no significant relationship between challenges in library facilities and effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the correlational research design. The area of study covered public federal universities in the South-South states of Nigeria. It comprised states of Rivers, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Delta and Edo States. A purposive sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 1200 administrators from six federal universities in these states. A self-developed questionnaire entitled, Effective Administration of Universities Questionnaire (EAUQ) was used to collect data from respondents. The instrument was duly validated and reliability of the instrument was established using test re-test method calculated with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation which yielded an index of 0.85. The study employed mean, standard deviation and the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation for data analysis .

RESULTS

Research Question One: What are the challenges confronting administrative effectiveness of universities in south-south states of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean rating response of administrators on the challenges confronting administrative effectiveness of universities

S/N	Items	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision	Rank Order
1.	Students' hostel accommodation	2.56	0.78	Accepted	3rd
2.	Instructional resources	2.58	0.65	Accepted	2nd
3.	Library facilities	3.42	1.02	Accepted	1st
4.	Staff quarters	2.38	0.57	Rejected	6th
5.	Lecture Halls/Classrooms	2.48	0.88	Rejected	4th
6.	Administrative offices	2.33	1.99	Rejected	7th
7.	Recreational facilities	2.44	1.85	Rejected	5th

The summary result in Table 1 reveals that students' hostel accommodation (2.56), library facilities (3.42) and instructional resources (2.56) attained a score equal to or above the criterion mean of 2.50. Thus, these facilities pose a major challenge to administrative effectiveness of universities.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between challenges in students' accommodation and effective administration of universities in south-south Nigeria?

Table 2: Relationship between challenges in students' accommodation and effective administration of universities

Students' Accommodation	Pearson's correlation	Effective administration
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028
		.000
	N	1200

Table 2 shows Pearson's Correlation (r) between students' accommodation and effective administration of universities is of low relationship (r = 0.028). The implication of the result is that the administrative effectiveness of universities is not linked to students' accommodation

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between challenges in instructional resources and effective administration of universities?

Table 3: Relationship between challenges in instructional resources and effective administration of universities

Instructional Resources	Pearson's correlation	Effective administration of universities
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.608
		.789
	N	1200

Table 3 indicates the extent of relationship between instructional resources and effective administration of universities. From table 3 the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) = 0.608. This shows that there is strong relationship between instructional resources and effective administration of universities. It follows that instructional resources enhances effective administration of universities.

Research Question four: What is the relationship between challenges in library facility and effective administration of universities?

Table 4: Relationship between challenges in library facilities and effective administration of universities

Library facility	Pearson's correlation	Effective administration of universities
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.276
		.000
	N	1200

Table 4 shows Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r = 0.276) between challenges in library facility and effective administration of universities is low, but the positive relationship between the two variables indicates that administrative effectiveness of university improves with adequacy of library facilities.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho$_1$: There is no significant relationship between challenges in students' hostel accommodation and effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria.

Table 5: Correlation (r) of Effective Administration with students' hostel accommodation

	Effective administration	Students' hostel accommodation
Effective Administration	r – 1.0000	0.205
	n – (1200)	(1200)
	p -	0.524
Students' hostel accommodation	r – 0.0205	1.000
	n – (1200)	(1200)
	p – 523	

Coefficient/(cases)/2-tailed significance); P ≥ 0.05 indication – not significant.

Table 5 shows the analysis of the correlation between administrative effectiveness of universities in south-south Nigeria and students' hostel accommodation. The computed correlation coefficient (r) was 0.025. The corresponding critical value of r at 5% probability level was 0.524. This critical value is greater than 0.05, therefore, the computed r – 0.02 was not significant. The hypothesis was therefore upheld.

Ho$_2$: There is no significant relationship between challenges in instructional resources and effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria.

Table 6: Correlation (r) of effective administration with learning resources

	Effective administration	Students' hostel accommodation
Effective Administration	r – 1.0000	0.525
	n – (1200)	(1200)
	p – 0.102	0.523
Learning Resources	r – 0.0525	1.0000
	n – (1200)	(1200)
	p – 0.051	0.102

Coefficient/(cases)/2-tailed significance); P ≥ 0.05 indication – significant.

Table 6 shows the analysis of the correlation between administrative effectiveness and learning resources. The computed correlation coefficient (r) was 0.051 while the corresponding critical value of P at 0.05 level was 0.102. It means therefore that the computed r of 0.05 is significant. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Ho₃: **There is no significant relationship between challenges in library facilities and effective administration of universities in South-South Nigeria.**

Table 7: Correlation (r) of effective administration with library facilities

	Effective administration	Students' hostel accommodation
Effective Administration	r – 1.0000	0.0548
	n – (1200)	(1200)
	p – 0.055	0.044*
Library facilities	r – 0.0548	1.0000
	n – (1200)	(1200)
	p – 0.044*	0.055

Coefficient/(cases)/2-tailed significance); *$P < 0.05$ indication – significant.

Table 7 shows the analysis of the correlation between library facilities and administration effectiveness. The computed correlation coefficient was 0.055. The corresponding critical value of P at 5% probability level was 0.440. The critical value was more than the computed r of 0.055. Therefore, the computed r was significant. The null hypothesis was rejected and subsequently the alternative was upheld which stated there is significant relationship between challenges in library facilities and effective administration of university in south-south Nigeria.

DISCUSSION

Summary of result in Table 1 reveals that the provision of students' hostel accommodation (2.56), library facilities (3.42) and instruction resources posed major challenges to the effective administration of universities in south-south states of Nigeria. The result supports that of Ehiametalor (2001) and Osagie (2001) who observed that hostel accommodation, classroom space, library facility and laboratory are very indispensable in the activities of schools.

From the data analysed and findings made, it is evident that the relationship between challenges in students' accommodation and administrative effectiveness was very low (r = 0.028). Moreover, this relationship was not found significant when tested at 0.05 level of significance, indicating that providing students' accommodation has no significant effect on the promotion of administrative effectiveness of universities. In other words, the provision of students' accommodation does not relate to effective administration of universities. This finding contradicts that of Asiegbu (2014) who maintained that students' hostel influence school administration. From this finding, university management may not lay too much emphasis on students' hostel accommodation but could focus on other areas of school administration. This seems to explain and agree with the result of the null hypothesis that stated that there is no significant relationship between students' accommodation and effective administration of universities in south-south Nigeria.

Regarding the relationship between challenge in instructional resources and administrative effectiveness of universities a high positive relationship was obtained (r = 0.608). This implies that instructional resources enhanced the administrative effectiveness of universities. This finding is in agreement with that of Ogonor (2001) and Verspoor (1994). Thus, the provision of instructional resources will go a long way to easing the administrative challenges confronting university administrators in south-south of Nigeria. Surprisingly, institutions seemingly do not provide these learning materials and consumables sufficiently. In

some cases the provision of these materials do not meet the needs of large number students admitted into programme.

The findings also revealed a relationship between library facilities and administrative effectiveness of universities (r = 0.276). From the findings, it can be inferred that provision of library facilities promotes administrative effectiveness of universities. In support of this finding, Adesina (1990) and Saint, Hartnet and Strassner (2003) linked availability of library facilities to university governance.

Furthermore, the hypothesis that states that there is no significant relationship between library facilities and effective administration of universities in south-south Nigeria was rejected. The implications of this finding is that where students, staff and other library users are actively engrossed in academic research, little time would be left for untoward behaviour that could hinder administrative effectiveness of universities.

CONCLUSION

The need for university education emanates from the understanding that the system is responsible for the production and development of high level manpower. The findings of the study indicated that universities in South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria have myriad of challenges. These include students' hostel accommodation, library facilities and instructional resources. Nevertheless, for meaningful development to take place in the university system the infrastructural base of the universities should be improved and adequately funded, funding will address the problem of infrastructural decay.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- To improve the quality of university education, the infrastructural base of the universities should be improved, this includes rehabilitation of existing facilities.
- University management in South-South states of Nigeria should intensify efforts in providing more library facilities and instructional resources to enhance the quality of university education.
- University management in the areas studied should also partner with corporate bodies, philanthropists and Alumni Associations to ensure adequate provision of these facilities especially instructional resources.

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