

GOVERNING COUNCILS' PRACTICAL APPROACH ON MANAGEMENT OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated governing councils' practical approach on management of federal universities in North Central Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. The study formulated and tested two null hypotheses. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 1,451 which comprised 108 governing council, 1078 Senate, 70 Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), 65 Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU), 60 Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU) and 70 Students Union Government (SUG), from the 7 federal universities in the North Central Nigeria. The sample was 364 governing council members. The instrument used for data collection was a four-point rating scale questionnaire titled "Governing Councils Approach and Management of Federal Universities Questionnaire (GCAMFUQ)". The instrument was validated by three experts to determine the validity of the instrument while Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The result of the reliability test yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84. The research questions were answered using mean scores and standard deviations with a mean score cut-off point of 2.50. Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study indicated that governing councils have significant influence on financial management and maintenance of ICT facilities in federal universities in North Central Nigeria. The study concluded that governing councils have positive influence on management of federal universities. The study therefore recommended among other that governing councils should ensure to partner with relevant stakeholders in education so universities finances are well managed and ICT facilities properly maintained in order to effectively store and retrieve information for achievement of Federal Universities' objectives.

Keywords: Governing councils, financial management, ICT facilities, management of federal universities

Introduction

University is as an institution where staff and students pursue and acquire intellectual, technological, character, moral and practical skills. The main objective of the university is to provide high quality, comprehensive educational and training opportunities

that are compatible to changing needs of staff and students (Federal Republic of Nigeria (NPE) 2014). Through its management and academic programmes, the university prepares its staff and students for the challenges of the 21st century and empowers them to meet the task of a rapidly changing world. To achieve this objective Oshio (2014) states that the management team of the universities perform many functions including the design, implementation and maintenance of the university's programmes, services and operations, as well as standards, and for using measurement systems to improve overall performance.

In North Central Nigeria, it appears that management of federal universities is not meeting up the standard the society expects. It seems that there is lack of achievement of quality university education in North Central Nigeria. This has been attributed to the activities of the governing councils. The governing council is the university's governing body and has the responsibility for both the general direction and superintendence of its University (Oshio, 2011). The governing councils also respond to the challenges involved in the governing process by making the decisions for sustainable, ethical, and effective management of university education, (Korgba, 2011). Council exercises its powers and perform its functions without undue external influence (Oshio, 2014). In the discharge of councils' mandate however, most university governing councils' activities come into conflict with other organized bodies within the Universities over the implementation of such policies. As a result, the relevant stakeholders of University system particularly Academic, Non-Academic staff and students, have expressed serious concerns about the activities of governing councils in the management of federal universities in the North Central Nigeria particularly in the areas of financial management and provision of information and communication technology.

Finance is one of the important resources of universities without adequate management and effective utilization the universities will hardly succeed. As a management body, governing councils are responsible for financial management as they deal with the resources and monetary aspect of business for funding and operating a business with adequate return. No university has ever succeeded without proper utilization of its financial resources. Ekenem (2014) opines that financial management involves recognition and respect for authorities, regulations and practices governing the receiving, keeping and spending of funds. Agabi (2013) asserts that financial management of any university is concerned with effective acquisition, allocation, recording and utilization of funds to achieve university's objectives. The finance function gives life to other activities of the university. Arikewuyo (2010) maintains that governing councils' responsibility to effectively manage universities is very necessary if universities are to achieve their set goals because the issue of funding and managing the inadequate funds has been a source of crisis in the Nigeria Educational System.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) application in education has gained popularity over the past decades and this has led to a change in the way tertiary institutions are managed. This change has not only affected administrative processes and management but also has an influence on teaching and learning process or monitoring of students' progress in tertiary institutions. Alkadi (2014) stated that information communication technology focused on understanding the process, systems and mechanism pertaining to information storage, absorption, transfer, presentation and processing through understanding the scientific principles in record management. According to Tedla (2012) the integration of ICT into this process enhances the overall admission activities of higher

education institutions by making it more accessible to many. Dauda (2008) asserts that vice chancellors use ICT to govern or manage their university through the use of electronic devices which help them to learn how to keep records on goal achievement issues, lecturers and students. Odekunle (2015) opines that ICT is also an excursion into learning and research, and other areas of computer appreciation that can enhance education where the governing councils can improve their performance as leaders and heads of their university. Based on this background the study sought to investigate governing councils' practical approach towards management of federal universities in North Central Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Management of federal universities especially in North Central Nigeria seems to become a major concern of relevant stakeholders such as National Universities Commission (NUC), Academic, Non Academic staff and students maybe due to the fact if effective carried out would result to quality university education. It has been observed by the researcher that in recent years, management of federal universities seems to be ineffective and this has been attributed to governing councils. The governing councils in the federal universities in the study appear to fail in their responsibility of financial management and maintenance of ICT.

The researcher further observed financial challenges in the federal universities maybe due to governing councils' inability to effectively manage universities finances. This also seems to have negative influence on academic and administrative activities of the universities as it leads to poor provision of facilities and maintenance of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities in the federal universities. The poor state or lack of facilities also demoralizes staff in performing their duties effectively making it difficult for effective teaching and learning which seems to negatively affecting effective management of federal universities. It against this study sought to investigate governing councils' practical approach toward management of federal universities in North Central Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate influence of governing councils' practical approach towards management of federal universities in North Central Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. examine the influence of governing councils on financial management in federal universities in North Central Nigeria.
2. determine the influence of governing councils on maintenance of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities in federal universities.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the influence of governing councils on financial management in federal universities in North Central Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of governing councils on maintenance of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities in federal universities?

Hypotheses

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

1. Governing councils have no significant influence on financial management in federal universities in North Central Nigeria.
2. Governing councils have no significant influence on maintenance of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities in federal universities.

Methodology

The design of the study was descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 1451 made up of 108 governing council members, 1078 Senate members, 70 Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) Executive members, 65 Senior Staff Association of Nigeria Universities (SSANU) Executive members, 60 Non Academic Staff Union (NASU) Executive members and 70 Students Union Government (SUG) Executive members, from the 7 Federal Universities in the North Central Nigeria. The sample of the study is 364 respondents consisting of 27 governing council members. A multi-stage sampling procedure involving stratified and purposive random sampling techniques was adopted for the study. A structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire titled, Governing Councils Approach and Management of Federal Universities Questionnaire (GCAMFUQ) is divided into two sections. Section A contains demographic information of the respondents. The questionnaire was validated by three experts in Faculty of Education Benue State University, Makurdi. The questionnaire was structured on four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA)=4, Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)=1. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through trial-testing on 30 governing council members who were part of the sampled population but were part of the population to determine the internal consistency of the items and reliability coefficient using Cronbach alpha and it yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.84. Data were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics of Mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions. A Mean value benchmark of 2.50 was used to determine agree or not agree. This implies that if the Mean value of an item is above the Mean benchmark of 2.50 it signifies agree whereas any item with a Mean value of less than 2.50 signifies disagree. Chi-square was employed to test the hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1:

What is the influence of governing councils' financial management on management of federal universities in North Central Nigeria?

What is the influence of governing councils' on financial management in federal universities?

Table 1:
Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of the Influence of Governing Councils on Financial Management in Federal Universities

S/No	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	δ	Decision
1	Governing councils enhance effective sourcing and generating of revenue for universities.	280	96	88	40	56	2.57	1.15	Agree
2	Governing councils facilitate quick disbursement of fund to the appropriate channels in universities.	280	84	72	84	40	2.73	1.17	Agree
3	Governing councils ensure universities budgets are assessed before implementation.	280	102	70	84	24	3.00	.93	Agree
4	Governing councils ensure books of accounts are properly audited for financial prudence.	280	24	168	40	48	2.67	.91	Agree
5	Governing councils enhance speedy completion of capital project in universities.	280	104	84	48	44	2.80	1.20	Agree
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation							2.75	1.07	Agree

Source: Researcher 2022

Table 1 reveals Mean score values of 2.57, 2.73, 3.00, 2.67, 2.80 and 2.75 for cluster with corresponding Standard Deviation of 1.15, 1.17, 0.93, 0.91, and 1.20 also a cluster of 1.07. This result indicated that item 11-15 agreed that governing councils influence financial management of Federal Universities. Opinion from the field survey shows that governing councils influence effective sourcing and generating of revenue for universities, facilitate quick disbursement of fund to the appropriate channels in universities, ensures universities budgets are assessed before implementation, ensure books of accounts are properly audited for financial prudence and enhances speedy completion of capital project in universities. The cluster Mean score value of 2.75 was found to be above the Mean score value benchmark of 2.50. This implied that governing councils influence financial management in federal universities.

Research Question 2:

What is the influence of governing councils' maintenance of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities approach on management of federal universities?

What is the influence of governing councils on maintenance of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities in federal universities?

Table 2:

Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of the influence of Governing Councils on Maintenance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Facilities in Federal Universities

S/No	Item Description	N	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	δ	Decision
6	Governing councils help to reduce workload of lecturers in marking and keeping students' records	280	108	28	84	60	2.73	1.06	Agree
7	Governing councils make administrative tasks of universities administrators easy.	280	128	72	20	96	2.67	1.22	Agree
8	Governing councils enable easy preparation of universities budget.	280	82	60	56	72	2.70	1.16	Agree
9	Governing councils make teaching and learning easy.	280	72	120	32	66	2.87	1.09	Agree
10	Facilitates communication process in the universities.	280	76	92	60	52	2.60	.91	Agree
Grand Mean and Standard Deviation							2.71	1.09	Agree

Source: Researcher 2022

Table 2 showed Mean score values of 2.73, 2.67, 2.70, 2.87, 2.60 and 2.71 for cluster while Standard Deviation values of 1.06, 1.22, 1.16, 1.09, 0.91 and 1.09 was recorded for item 16-20. The result implies that all items were regarded as agreed. respondent opinion showed that governing councils maintenance of information and communication technology (ICT) reduces workload of lecturers in marking and keeping students' records, makes administrative tasks of universities administrators easy, enables easy preparation of universities budget, makes teaching and learning easy and facilitates communication process in the universities. This implied that governing councils influence maintenance of information and communication technology.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

Governing council has no significant influence on financial management in federal universities.

Table 3:

Chi-square Analysis Summary of Influence of Governing Councils on Financial Management in Federal Universities

Responses	Fo	Fe	P	df	x² Cal.	Decision
SA	110	70.0				
A	98	70.0	0.000	3	16.921 ^a	Sign.
D	32	70.0				
SD	40	70.0				
Total	280					

Source: Researcher 2022

Table 3 showed Chi-square calculated value of 16.921^a at 3 degree of freedom; P=0.000 is less than 0.05. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of governing councils on financial management in federal universities was rejected or not accepted. This can be interpreted to mean that there is sufficient statistical evidence to state that there is influence of governing councils' decisions on management activities; there is significant positive influence of governing councils on financial management in federal universities.

Hypothesis 2:

Governing councils have no significant influence on maintenance of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities in federal universities.

Table 18:

Chi-square Analysis Summary of Influence of Governing Councils on Maintenance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Facilities in Federal Universities

Responses	Fo	Fe	P	df	x² Cal.	Decision
SA	126	70.0				
A	79	70.0	0.000	3	149.310 ^a	Sign.
D	54	70.0				
SD	21	70.0				
Total	280					

Source: Researcher 2022

Table 4 showed Chi-square calculated value of 149.310^a at 3 degree of freedom; P=0.000 is less than 0.05. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of governing councils on maintenance of information and communication technology facilities in federal universities was rejected or not accepted. This can be interpreted to mean that there is sufficient statistical evidence to state that there is influence of governing councils' decisions on management activities; there is significant positive influence of governing councils on maintenance of information and communication technology facilities in federal universities.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of the study showed that governing councils has significant positive influence on financial management in Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria. This

means that governing councils influence effective sourcing and generating of revenue for universities, facilitate quick disbursement of fund to the appropriate channels in universities, ensures universities budgets are assessed before implementation, ensure books of accounts are properly audited for financial prudence and enhances speedy completion of capital project in universities. This finding is in line with the opinion of Arikewuyo (2010) who maintains that governing councils' responsibility to effectively manage universities is very necessary if universities are to achieve their set goals because the issue of funding and managing the inadequate funds has been a source of crisis in the Nigeria Educational System.

The second finding of the study showed that governing councils has significant positive influence on maintenance of information and communication facilities in Federal Universities. This means that governing councils maintenance of information and communication technology (ICT) reduces workload of lecturers in marking and keeping students' records, makes administrative tasks of universities administrators easy, enables easy preparation of universities budget, makes teaching and learning easy and facilitates communication process in the universities. This finding agreed with the opinion of Tedla (2012) who stated that the integration of ICT into this process enhances the overall admission activities of higher education institutions by making it more accessible to many. The finding also agreed with the opinion of Odekunle (2015) who opines that ICT is also an excursion into learning and research, and other areas of computer appreciation that can enhance education where the governing councils can improve their performance as leaders and heads of their university.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it has been established that, there was significant positive influence of Governing Councils on financial management and maintenance of ICT in federal universities North Central Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following are the recommendations using variables of management of federal universities by governing councils.

1. Governing councils should assure to partner with relevance stakeholders of education so that universities finances are effectively managed for the benefits of Federal Universities in North Central Nigeria.
2. Governing councils and other members of the universities community should ensure that ICT is properly maintained so that information within the university is stored and retrieved properly for the purpose of achievement of Federal Universities' objectives.

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