



Full Length Research Paper

University administration and effective academic leadership; Nigerian perspective

Victoria C. Onyeike* and Atuwokiki Sam Jaja

Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt

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University education is a critical level of education that is saddled with the responsibility of providing the much needed skilled manpower for any society. University administrators are the engine room of universities they form the vital workforce within these institutions and are made up of human resources who utilize material and financial resources to accomplish set academic goals. In order to ensure effective academic leadership in these universities, it is important to determine the conditions under which university administrators currently operate and measures that can be adopted to improve their standard of operation in federal and state universities in South-South Nigeria. This paper was designed to clarify these issues on university administration in South-South Nigeria and its effect on academic leadership. The study population consisted of lecturers in 11 federal and state universities in South-South Nigeria, from which a total of 880 respondents were sampled. A descriptive survey research was used to discover the opinion of lecturers on three research questions which bothered the researcher on this issue. The study revealed that university administrators in federal universities adopted democratic style of leadership, while in state universities the participation style of leadership was the most commonly used style. The research also revealed that there is a need to improve the funding mechanism of university administration in South-South Nigeria for enhanced teaching, learning and research to take place. Also better remuneration and compensation for administrators are seen as important strategies to transform university administration and provide effective academic leadership in South-South Nigeria.

Keywords: University, administrator, University administrator and leadership

INTRODUCTION

Corruption, academic infrastructural decay, inappropriate governing structures, political interference, campus instability, inadequate funding and many more, are all considered as major reasons for the decline in the standard of university education in Nigeria. The quality of university administrators is also a major factor that determines the manner in which university resources (human, financial and material resources) are managed to accomplish set academic goals. Mismanagement of most universities in Nigeria has contributed to the drop in the quality of teaching and learning across tertiary institutions in the

country. University administration is made up of administrators who are part of the human resource workforce of universities, they are a vital resource that manages and utilizes all other resources (financial and material) to accomplish set goals. Within tertiary institutions such as universities, university administrators make up that essential human resource needed to move university education forward.

University administrators are saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that university education is given its rightful place as the driving force for human capital development,

*Corresponding author. E-mail: vonyeike@yahoo.com

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Research and Development (R&D), information and knowledge transfer adaptation and dissemination. These administrators are also required to ensure the building of national identity, promotion of socio-economic and cultural change, regulation of political changes such as the adoption of new forms of capitalism and democratic tenets. These can only be achieved by university administrators through strict observation of the educational policies of the country. Grants and contract administration, and institutional compliance with federal and state regulations are also essential responsibilities of university administrators (Graham, 2013).

However, the quality of university administrators determines the ability of a university to adapt, evolve and function efficiently and effectively in line with global changes. Poor university administration affects teaching and learning, university research and the goals of university education anywhere in the world. Goodall, (2009) efficient university management leads to the realization of university education, this reflects its positive attributes as highlighted in the preceding paragraph. Thus this empirical paper provides a broad understanding of university administrators and effective academic leadership in Nigeria it highlighted the leadership techniques adopted in universities, showed the perception of university administrators and academic leaders of what their responsibilities are, accentuated the motivational strategies used to stimulate effectiveness in university staff.

Purpose of the Study

University administration in Nigeria is constantly changing such changes can be attributed to ups and downs in the society and the world at large. With these changes in university administration and the academic environment in general it is crucial to determine the overall impact of university administration on effective academic leadership across universities in Nigeria. As such this paper was designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. Investigate the leadership styles adopted by university administrators in federal and state universities in the South South region of Nigeria.
2. Determine how university administrators develop the processes of teaching, learning and research in the university in the South South region of Nigeria.
3. Investigate how university administrators enhance the quality of its academic staff in the South South region of Nigeria.

Research Questions

Explicitly, the following research questions were addressed in the study.

1. What are the various styles of leaders adopted by university administrators of federal and state universities in the South South region of Nigeria?

2. How do university administrators develop the process of teaching, learning and research in Nigerian universities in the South South region of Nigeria?

3. How do university administrators enhance the quality of academic staff in the South South region of Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was used, which required the collection of data from a sample drawn from a given population to enable the researcher examine and describe an existing and on-going phenomenon regarding university administration and effective academic leadership in Nigeria. A combination of simple random sampling and stratified sampling were employed in the sample selection. The population for this study consisted of all the lecturers in federal and state universities in the South South region of Nigeria. To ensure that there was an approximate representation of these universities in the South South geopolitical region of Nigeria; it was divided (stratified sampling) into the six states the make up the region namely; Cross Rivers State, Akwa Ibom State, Rivers State, Bayelsa State, Delta State and Edo State. Then through a process of simple random sampling, at least one federal and one state university were sampled from each state, however, only some listed states have a federal and state universities, this gave a total of 11 universities that were sampled from the South South geopolitical in Nigeria. These universities include the following;

1. Akwa Ibom State University of Science and Technology (AKUTECH).
2. University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State (UniUyo).
3. University of Calabar, Cross Rivers State (UniCal).
4. Cross Rivers State University of Technology (CRSUT).
5. University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State (UniPort).
6. Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST).
7. Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State.
8. Delta State University, Abraka (DELSU).
9. Federal University of Petroleum, Effurun, Delta State
10. University of Benin, Edo State (UniBen)
11. Benson Idahosa University, Edo State.

Then through a process of stratified sampling and accidental sampling, 80 lecturers from each university was sampled, this made up the sample for this study (880 lecturers).

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a fixed response questionnaire, titled "University Administration and Effective Academic Leadership Questionnaire (UAEALQ)". The questionnaire was designed specifically for lecturers.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was limited to federal and state universities in the South-South geopolitical region of Nigeria, the states in this geopolitical region of Nigeria

were selected based on proximity, time and budget constraints. The researcher determined the various types of academic leadership styles used in Nigerian universities, investigated the process of developing teaching, learning and research in Nigerian universities, examined the motivational strategies adopted to encourage university staff in Nigerian universities and scrutinised university administrators strategies to enhance the quality of academic staff.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is the Situational Leadership Theory, this theory refined and developed new approaches to the study of leadership. The Situational Leadership Theory was propounded by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in the late 1970's, these scholars in their books *The Situational Leader* and *The One Minute Manager* respectively, developed the authors both developed their own models using the situational leadership theory; Hersey - Situational Leadership Model and Blanchard- Situational Leadership II Model, collectively they are known as the Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Model (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

Situational leadership theory is based on a certain key principal that there is no particular best style of leadership. In effect, efficient and effective leadership is task oriented, and the most successful leaders constantly adjust their style of leadership to suit the maturity of the individuals or group of people they lead or inspire. Such leaders also ensure that the capacity to set high but attainable goals, willingness and ability to take responsibility for the task, and relevant education and/or experience of an individual or a group for the task. According to the Situational Theory, an effective leadership varies, not just in terms of the person or group that is being led, but it also depends on the task, job, goal or function that needs to be accomplished (Vecchio, 1987). The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Model rests on two fundamental concepts; *leadership style* and *maturity level* (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969) these are extensively discussed in the literature review.

University administration and effective leadership which is the focus of the research requires leadership skills and the adoption of various leadership styles. An effective university administrator or leader is required not just to lead a person but in some cases a group of people such as students or other members of staff within the tertiary institution in a manner that is effective and efficient. However, the leadership style differs not just in terms of the person leading or group that is being led, but it also depends on the task, job, goal or function within the university. The effectiveness of a university leadership

style adopted can be based on either the leadership style of the university administrator or the maturity level, this makes the Situational Theory as stated in the Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Model suitable for this study. The connection between this theory and university administration and effective leadership can be seen in terms of the leadership style adopted and the maturity level of university administrators in order to achieve academic success in Nigerian universities (Fernandez, & Vecchio, 1997).

Conceptual Framework

Styles of University Administration and Academic Leadership in University Education

Lecturers and non-academic staff of universities who are administrators can adopt different styles of academic leadership in Nigeria into their various educational institutions. The leadership styles adopted by the various university leaders or lecturers generally affects lecturer's productivity and the overall academic leadership style quality and morale. There are three leadership styles that can be adopted by academic leaders in their respective school and these are:

1. Autocratic: This is a leadership style which university administrators who are autocratic in nature use, these academic administrators who use this style tend to make decisions without consulting or negotiating with their subordinates. These university administrators are viewed as possessing absolute authority in campuses as such they are obeyed and their decisions are complied with. In certain universities, these autocratic academic leaders use one-way communication rather than a two-way communication used by university administrators (Riley, 2012). That is they apply force, command and compel subordinates or students to carry out instructions without expecting them to suggest their opinions. This leadership style in universities has the advantage of fast and prompt decision making, which is very important during crisis and in large educational institutions. A major disadvantage with this leadership style in universities is that it can lead to over dependence on the university administrators for decision making and this can lead to stress, low productivity and low student morale especially when the opinion of such administrators are not valued and their reputation questioned.

2. Democratic: Lecturers who have democratic leadership style tend to consult and negotiate with their subordinates before decisions are made in the university environment. These democratic minded university administrators will adopt a communication method where students and subordinates can make their opinions known, which may differ from the lecturer's opinion. University administrators who adopt this leadership style require excellent communication skills and a two-way communication means to express to students and other

subordinates certain ideas, expectations, requirements and concerns they may have (Riley, 2012). A major advantage of this leadership style is that subordinates within the university environment feel more appreciated this leads to an effective academic leadership atmosphere. The negative side of using this leadership style in an academic university environment where subordinates constantly interfering in the process of making decisions, in large universities it can slow down the decision making process (Simpson, & Smith, 2011).

3. Laissez-Faire: This is a leadership style of administration that is adopted by university administrators when they allow their subordinates and students to carry out functions at their own pace and time. As such there is very little or no administration technique or authority adopted by university administrators. This university administration style of leadership is applicable to universities that are involved in product design and construction such as vocational, science and technical universities where the flexibility and freedom provided in such a university environment stimulates creativity and productivity in subordinates and students alike (Riley, 2012). The advantage of this university leadership style in university campuses is that subordinates who are not controlled and closely monitored can be more productive and build their confidence. The disadvantage of *laissez faire* is that students can make poor judgements or decisions when not supervised and they might not work as hard in the absence of a superior.

Academic institutions adopt the various listed leadership styles to improve the productivity, and quality of performance in such institutions. These styles of leadership when used in the university environment can either be used separately or in a combination of ways; for instance a university administrator can apply a blend of autocratic and democratic leadership styles or a blend of *laissez-faire* and autocratic styles of leadership. The combination of various styles of leadership in campuses is done to minimise the disadvantages and maximise the advantages of certain styles of leadership. However, the adoption of any leadership style by university administration is usually based on the personality traits of the administrator and the objectives he/she is trying to accomplish in the university.

Leadership Style:

According to Hersey & Blanchard (1969) leadership styles can be categorised in relation to the extent of *Task Behaviour* and *Relationship Behaviour* that the leader provides to followers. This categorization can be divided into four behaviour types, namely S1 to S4:

S1: Telling – This is defined by one-way communication in which the leader determines the roles and responsibilities of the individual or group that is led and makes available the what, how, why, when and where to do the task.

S2: Selling – Leaders of this category tend to focus on communicating their idea or vision to followers, the leader essentially uses two-way communication to communicate and listen to his/her subordinates. It entails providing the socio-emotional support and information to individual or group being led or influenced to buy into a particular process.

S3: Participating - This involves shared decision-making between the leader and those led about aspects of how the task is accomplished. However, the leader provides less task behaviours while maintaining high relationship behaviour with those led.

S4: Delegating – This category of leaders are still involved in decisions however, they tend to pass the process of decision making and responsibility to other individuals or members of the group. While the leader supervises or monitors the progress of work or task carried out.

Amongst these various leaderships styles there is no single acceptable style that is regarded as being ideal for all leaders at every time. Instead it is expected that effective leaders need to be flexible and adaptive in order to choose the best leadership style for certain situations.

Maturity Level

According to Hersey & Blanchard (1969) the leadership style to adopt depends on the person or group being led. The Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory identified four levels of Maturity M1 through M4:

M1 – This group of individuals lack the specific skills required for the job in hand and are unable and unwilling to do or to take responsibility for this job or task.

M2 – This group of individuals are unable to take on responsibility for the task being done, however, they are willing to work on the task. They are novice but enthusiastic.

M3 – This group of individuals are experienced and able to do the task but lack the confidence or the willingness to take on responsibility.

M4 – This group of individuals are experienced at the task, and comfortable with their own ability to do it well. They are able and willing to not only do the task, but also they can take responsibility for the task.

Maturity Levels is believed to be very task-specific, in the sense that certain individuals maybe generally skilled, confident and motivated in their job, but would still have a maturity level M1 when asked to perform a task requiring skills they don't possess. While some individuals might be less skilled, confident and motivated in their job, but will have the maturity level M4 when asked to perform a task requiring skills they possess naturally.

Effectiveness of University Administration in Teaching, Learning and Research.

The ability of university administrators to effectively ensure that teaching, learning and research in universities are

effective and efficient requires that administrators must possess increased control and awareness of the university environment. This means that university leaders would need to improve themselves through regular training and retraining, which will expand their knowledge and experience on the job. Academic leaders or university administrators who understand the need to adjust their leadership style and behaviour when dealing with students will have better performance in teaching, learning and research.

University administration effectiveness refers to the ability of the ability of academic leaders to effectively carry out administrative tasks associated with employee administration, university's social responsibility, student staff administration, financial and physical resources, experience and training, and university administration effectiveness and age.

1. Employees Administration: Cooke and Dunhil (1992) stated that university administrators must motivate and create an enlightened and dynamic university staff administration where lecturers are provided with regular in-service training, retraining and seminar programmes. University administrators must be seen as agents of the university environment who encourage inspiration and assistance amongst university employees through advice, stimulation, instruction, and guidance. This will ensure an effective and efficient employee administration in universities, similarly, university administrators are expected to develop opportunities and methods through which employees in universities can also participate in planning, policymaking and the entire decision making process in cooperation with university academic leaders. An effective university administration system involves adoption of an employee administration system that is along the lines of what is stipulated.

2. University's Social Responsibility: In a bid to ensure effective university-community relations (social responsibility), university administrators must learn and understand the needs of the neighbouring communities around the university's location. Academic leadership should develop cooperation with both the existing monarch and the political government in power, they must also possess organizational ability for leadership, and understand that there are unlimited human and physical resources in every community that can be organized and used to facilitate effective university social responsibility. The university administration must frequently notify the community about the conditions, achievements, and needs of the university and vice versa. Academic leadership require the presence of public relation officers who have the ability to seek and maintain student cooperation in planning and maintaining good university community relationship programs.

3. Student Staff Administration: University administrators must have indebt knowledge of what it

means to maintain an excellent relationship with students within tertiary institutions in order to sustain effective academic leadership and sustain progress. The process of promoting student staff administration in universities means that students are given an opportunity in the decision-making process. That is students are allowed to participate in making decisions concerning them, or else, they will object to such decisions, also it can be hard for them to also make decisions when confronted with dilemmas of decision-making later on in life if not given such an opportunity. It is also important that a system of meeting the individual needs of students in terms inventory, information, counselling, placement, and research services are met, this creates an academic environment that is student friendly (Osezuah, 2000).

4. Financial and Physical Resources: University administrators are expected to manage financial and physical resources of the institution in an efficient and effective manner in order to accomplish the objectives of the institution. The process of managing financial and physical resources of the institution involves purchasing and applying for supplies and materials needed in the institution, also accounting for university monies, and maintaining accurate inventory of university property Okolo (2001). It is vital to state that in universities the effective and efficient management of financial and physical resources does not mean how money goes into the university system, but how well the available funds are effectively put to use by university administrators. It is the responsibility and role of university administrators to plan, program, budget, monitor, and evaluate financial and physical resources in a productive and resourceful way.

5. Experience and Training: University administration is made up of academic leaders these leaders have been influenced based on the experience they have acquired from leading people. Studies show that duration of service significantly determines leadership potential university administrators with experience ranging from 1 to 10 years and those with 20 years of experience and above are usually more comfortable in academic leadership positions. Therefore experience significantly contributes to difference in academic leadership performance (Eyike, 2001). In-service training and retraining is positively correlated with effective academic leadership, university administrators who receive training are usually more efficient as leaders in university institutions. Similarly, a professionally trained university administrator performs better than non-professionals in universities, similarly teachers or lecturers who complete degrees in education more professional outputs than those who do not. Specialized training empowers and motivates academic leaders for better performance in institutions therefore experience and training are key ingredients for efficient university administration.

6. University Administration Effectiveness and Age:

A university administration comprised of lecturers of the same age is a university administration that is headed for crisis (Okolo, 2001). Similarly, a university administration that is uniformly old may be preferable to the one that is uniformly too young, as such an age mix would be preferable. Additionally, older university administrators tend to have had more years on the job, attended more seminars, trainings and participate in relevant professional discussions that exposed them to new techniques of administration this ensures efficiency. However, it is also true that younger university administrators tend to be full of energy and vigour to carry out their academic duties without feeling fatigue than their older counterparts.

In the Nigerian setting, factors such as employee administration, university's social responsibility, student staff administration, financial and physical resources control, experience and training, and university administration effectiveness and age have been considered before appointing academic leaders for leadership positions in universities. The relationship between these factors and university administration effectiveness seems unclear as there are variations and contradictions amongst some scholars. However, there is a unanimous agreement that these factors listed are crucial in ensuring effective university administration around the world.

Enhanced Quality of Academic Staff in Universities

Quality academic staff is an essential element that determines the quality of any institution. This is because the quality of an institution's academic staff is a major factor that influences student achievement and affects their cognitive, affective and behavioural outcome. According to Barber and Mourshed (2007), "the quality of an education system cannot exceed its teacher's". In order to improve the entire education system, it is vital to improve the quality of its academic staff, thus improving the quality of teaching and learning in the institution. Educational policy makers continue to consider improved quality of lecturers as an important tool for developing students and the foundation of a sound university education.

Quality academic staff refers to teachers or lecturers who have high academic ability to engage students in the classroom, advanced degree, subject or course mastery, high intellect and attitude. Some scholars have evaluated academic staff quality based on student performance, while others have related it to the academic qualifications held by teachers or lecturers. However, the enhancement of the quality of academic staff in universities goes beyond these assumptions, the quality of a nation's academic staff strength can be enhanced in the following ways:

1. Design Professional Development Programs:

The development of lecturers, university administrators and academic leadership in Nigerian universities must be in a manner that is in line with the learning goals of students and the university improvement goals. That is these professional development programs aimed developing the quality of lecturers and university administrators must be embedded with the daily work routine of universities, focus on content development in lecturers and the development of lecturing content. The purpose is to improve lecturer's quality through practice and feedback which will in turn improve student achievement in universities.

2. Appropriate Method of Compensation and remuneration:

There is a strong positive correlation between a highly motivated workforce and improved performance that is an academic staff which is properly compensated with relevant incentives and remuneration packages tends to produce better educational outcome in students. Studies have shown that extrinsic and intrinsic motivational packages when applied tend to have a positive result on university administrators. In the development of an appropriate compensation package that is sufficient for university administrators and academic staff it is vital to note that salary is important to lecturers. Lecturers should be rewarded through incentives and other motivational packages for good performance both as individuals and as a group, this will improve their quality, effort and contribution to work.

3. An Effective Evaluation Mechanism:

The quality of academic leadership and university administrators can only be determined through a process of evaluation, when lecturers are evaluated based on an existing yardstick their performance can thus be determined. However, in order to evaluate university administrators and lecturers, it is vital that Nigerian University Commission (NUC) in a bid to improve the quality of university administrators adopt a standard that defines good lecturing, defined procedure for lecturer evaluation and the role of student performance in the evaluation process. It is also important that the federal, state and privately owned universities are evaluated using the same measuring instrument, essentially there should be a level playing field.

4. Expanding the Lecturing Pool by Promoting the lecturing Career:

The quality of university administrators and academic leadership in universities in Nigeria can also be attributed to the pool of quality lecturers and university administrators available to these institutions. Vacancies in universities should be filled by individuals with both first degree and post graduate degrees, there should be a mix of academic staff and university administrators across various academic

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of leadership styles adopted in Federal Universities.

Leadership Styles Federal Universities	Frequency	Percentages
1. Autocratic	109	18.2%
2. Democratic	149	24.8%
3. Laissez faire	18	3%
4. Bureaucratic	77	12.8%
5. Two-Way Communication	116	19.3%
6. Participation	85	14.2%
7. Delegation	46	7.7%
Total	600	100%
Missing system	-	-
Total	600	100%

Source: Research Observation Results 2015.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of leadership styles adopted in State Universities

S/N Leadership Styles	State Universities	
	Frequency	Percentages
1. Autocratic	60	10%
2. Democratic	99	16.5%
3. Laissez faire	39	6.5%
4. Bureaucratic	56	9.3%
5. Two-Way Communication	101	16.8%
6. Participation	159	26.5%
7. Delegation	84	14%
Total	598	99.7%
Missing system	2	0.3%
Total	600	100%

Source: Research Observation Results 2015.

qualification. This rich diversity of lecturing and administrative pool of employees will breed competition; this in turn leads to improved efficiency and quality within the system. The key to developing administrative quality is also hinged on how enticing and lucrative the administrative positions appear, if a career in universities appear lucrative many will flock into it and the best quality of staff can be employed from the bunch of applicants.

5. University Administrators to Student Population

Ratio: In university administration all over the world, the quality and quantity of available manpower is crucial to the development of the educational institutions. A crucial determinant of the quantity of educational staff to employ is usually based on the student population of the university. However, the university administrator to student population ratio can determine if the academic leaders are able to cater for the students within the institution and applicants. Institutions that are understaffed tend to have academic problems and difficulties this is because the available school administrators and academic leaders are more likely to be overworked. Similarly, students from these understaff universities have to contend with crowded lecture halls and this significantly limits their learning and restricts personalised learning. While an optimal university administrator to student ratio reflects in

improved student performance, personalised learning, less stress on lecturers and university administrators as a whole.

RESULTS

The presentation and analysis of the data contains the answers to the research questions and results on university administrators and effective academic leadership in Nigerian universities. Frequencies, percentages, mean, mean set, standard deviation, z-test and p-value were all utilized in the presentation of the results of findings from the research.

Research Question 1: What are the various styles of leadership adopted by university administrators of federal and state universities in the South South region of Nigeria?

The researcher first determined the various leadership styles adopted by university administrators of federal and state universities in the South South geopolitical region of Nigeria. To achieve this, the researcher included university administration styles and academic leadership types such as autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire, others include telling (one-way communication), selling (two-way communication), participation, delegation, and the results of the data analysis are presented in [Table 1](#) and [2](#).

Table 3: Mean of the assessment of the process of improving teaching, learning and research in universities.

Process of Improving Teaching, Learning and Research	Mean	Mean Set	
		Federal Universities	State Universities
1. Improved funding.	2.60	2.70	2.65
2. Better Employee Administration.	1.07	1.02	1.05
3. Increased Social Responsibility.	1.84	1.89	1.87
4. Enhanced Academic Infrastructure.	2.82	2.45	2.64
5. Better University Student Administration.	1.81	1.45	1.63
6. Upgraded physical Administrative Resources.	2.07	2.18	2.13
7. Regular Training and Retraining.	2.13	2.02	2.07
8. Enhanced E-library Experience for Students and Lecturers.	1.93	2.11	2.02
9. Better Access to ICT facilities.	2.34	2.21	2.28
10. Realistic Age Limit for Academic Staff of Universities.	1.04	1.07	1.06
Aggregate Mean	1.97	1.91	1.94

Source: Research Observation Results 2015.

As clearly shown, a total of 7 styles of leadership were examined in federal universities. Adjudging by their frequency and percentages, it is obvious that the democratic style of leadership has the highest usage rate with 149 which represents 24.8% of respondents, while laissez faire has the least with a frequency of 18 which represents 3% of respondents. The implication here is that the democratic style of leadership is used by more lecturers than any other style of leadership listed in federal universities in South South Nigeria.

As plainly shown, a total of 7 styles of leadership were examined in state universities. Based on their frequency and percentage responses, it is obvious that the participation style of leadership has the highest usage rate with 159 which represents 26.5% of respondents, while laissez faire has the least with a frequency of 39 which represents 6.5% of respondents. The implication here is that the participation style of leadership is used by more lecturers than any other style of leadership listed in state universities in South South Nigeria.

Research Question 2: How do university administrators develop the process of teaching, learning and research in universities in the South South region of Nigeria?

The second question analyzed in this research is the process through which university administrators develop teaching, learning and research in federal and state universities in order to improve effective academic leadership in universities of the South South region of

Nigeria. In this respect, federal and state university lecturers were compared and the result of this enquiry stated in [Table 3](#).

As shown in the [Table 3](#), a total of 10 likely processes of improving teaching, learning and research with the aim of ensuring effective academic leadership were considered. Based on the mean weighting for these features, 1.04 and 2.82 for federal university lecturers, also 1.07 and 2.70 for state university lecturers, it is obvious that the range of response weighting falls below the 3.00 approximately, which is agreed by the questionnaire response mode. Additionally, the highest mean set is 2.65 on the issue of improved funding, which has mean of 2.60 and 2.70 for federal and state universities respectively. This is closely followed by the mean set of 2.64 on the issue of enhanced academic infrastructure, which has a mean of 2.82 and 2.45 for federal and state universities respectively. While the lowest mean set is 1.06 on the issue of realistic age limit for academic staff of universities, it has a mean of 1.04 and 1.07 for federal and state universities respectively.

Research Question 3: How do universities enhance the quality of university administrators in the South South region of Nigeria?

The third research question to be analyzed in this research dwelt on strategies to enhance the quality of university administrators in federal and state universities in order to improve effective academic leadership in

Table 4: Mean of the assessment of the process of improving teaching, learning and research in universities

Strategies to Improve University Administrators	Mean	Mean set	
		Federal Universities	State Universities
1.Design Professional Development Programs.	2.06	1.90	1.98
2.Appropriate Method of Compensation and Remuneration.	2.67	2.42	2.55
3.An Effective Evaluation Mechanism.	1.97	1.58	1.78
4.Expanding the Lecturing Pool by Promoting the lecturing Career.	1.82	1.45	1.64
5.Better Ratio of University Administrators to Student Population.	1.98	1.55	1.77
6.Upgraded financial, Physical and Administrative Resources.	2.43	2.19	2.31
7.Regular Training and Retraining.	1.91	1.98	1.95
Aggregate Mean	2.12	1.87	2.00

Source: Research Observation Results 2015.

universities of the South South region of Nigeria. In this respect, federal and state university lecturers were compared and the result of this enquiry stated in Table 4. As shown in the Table 4, a total of 7 strategies to improve university administration with the aim of advancing effective academic leadership were considered. Based on the mean weighting for these features, 1.82 and 2.67 for federal university lecturers, also 1.45 and 2.42 for state university lecturers, it is obvious that the range of response weighting falls below the 3.00 approximately, which is agreed by the questionnaire response mode. Furthermore, the highest mean set is 2.55 on the item on appropriate method of compensation and remuneration, which has mean of 2.67 and 2.42 for federal and state universities respectively. While the lowest mean set is 1.64 on the item on expanding the lecturing pool by promoting the lecturing career, it has a mean of 1.82 and 1.45 for federal and state universities respectively.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the findings of the research, it was discovered that the democratic style of leadership is the most common style adopted by federal university administrators in South South Nigeria. While in state universities in this region it was also discovered that the participation style of leadership was the most preferred style amongst university administrators, this based on the fact that most state universities are science and technology centered as such the mode of instruction requires participation. Other forms of leadership such as

two-way communication, autocratic, participation, bureaucratic and laissez faire are preferred in the respective descending order. Perren & Burgoyne (2001) agreed with this finding by stating that university administrators tend to form an open relationship that builds trust with their colleagues and students (democratic leadership style), while at the same time maintaining support for partnership and the accomplishment of set educational goals. The overwhelming number of lecturers who attested to this also acknowledged that a major factor that contributed to the choice of this form of leadership above others is based on the fact that, democratic tenets is being adopted globally as the best form of leadership.

The study revealed that the bureaucratic and laissez faire styles of leadership are amongst the least preferred forms adopted by university administrators in South South Nigeria. The reluctance to use these methods of leadership was attributed to several factors amongst which is the long period of time used in taking decisions using the bureaucratic style of leadership. Similarly, the university environment involves young youths who may not have acquired enough experience to take certain critical decision as such the adoption of laissez faire style of leadership can be counterproductive and hinder academic effectiveness. This confirms the findings of Burns, (2003) who stated that leadership styles adopted by successful leaders are usually determined with a goal or end result in mind. Therefore, university administrators will less likely be willing to adopt a style of leadership that is unable to accomplish set educational and academic goals of the institution, hence the rejection of the bureaucratic

and laissez faire styles of leadership by respondents.

It was also discovered in the research that university administrators are of the opinion that enhanced funding and improved educational infrastructure are key to the overall process of developing teaching, learning and research in universities in South South Nigeria. The amount of funds allocated to universities should be judiciously utilized to accomplish set educational objectives and improve effective academic leadership in universities. Similarly, educational infrastructural facilities should be available in sufficient quantities and of an excellent quality to meet up with international standards. However, the financing and provision of educational infrastructure for federal and state universities is the responsibility of the governments under which these institutions are set up. Unfortunately, state owned universities are restricted to the financial support offered by their respective state governments. Some of these state governments in Nigeria lack the financial muscle to single handedly fund university education efficiently Asiyai, (2013). As such in order to promote effective academic leadership through the enhancement of teaching, learning and research in universities in South South Nigeria, the source of funding and infrastructure provision is important.

The findings on the strategies to improve university administration within federal and state universities in South South Nigeria with the aim of advancing effective academic leadership discovered that adequate compensation and remuneration of university administrators remains the most important. However, this does not exclude the relevance of other factors such as the establishment of professional development programs for university administrators, effective evaluation mechanism, expansion of the lecturing pool, regular upgrade of university's financial, physical and administrative resources amongst others. The educational implication of this is that both the federal and state universities in the South South region of Nigeria must regularly ensure that their administrative standards are improved upon constantly through their various methods in order to maintain effective administrative leadership and accomplish set educational goals. This will ensure the effective and efficient functioning of university education in this geopolitical zone (Oduwaiye, 1998).

As a closing point, the study discovered that democratic style of leadership is keenly used in federal universities by university administrators. However, this does not negate the other leadership styles such as autocratic, bureaucratic, two-way communication, participation and delegation. While in state universities which are in most cases science and technology universities it was established that participation style of leadership is commonly used because during the course of teaching students science based courses their participation is often required. Although university

administrators indicated that none of these leadership styles is exclusively used instead a combination of various leadership styles is usually adopted by university administrators to accomplish effective academic leadership.

CONCLUSION / IMPLICATIONS

In view of the current standard of university administration in South South Nigeria, it is apparent that it has failed to realize its goal of being a fertile ground to effectively groom academic leaders in the country. It lacks sufficient financial, physical and educational infrastructures that will enable it thrive and efficiently actualize its goal of human capital development. This is based on the fact that university administrators and tertiary education as a whole is not receiving adequate attention and support from both the federal and state government, to the detriment of academic leaders, students and educational stakeholders.

The educational consequence of this conclusion to university education in the South South region of Nigeria is worrisome. This is because at this current stage of neglect, university administrators will produce ineffective academic leaders who are unable to push tertiary education in the region forward. The fact remains that in the absence of a clear understanding of the leadership style that is best suited to foster growth, productivity and efficiency in the university education system of Nigeria, there can be no effective academic progress.

Additionally, it was discovered in this study that the overall process of developing teaching, learning and research in universities with the aim of effectively improving academic leadership in South South Nigeria, has revealed several problems. It has explicated factors such as better employee administration, increased social responsibility, enhanced academic infrastructure, better university student administration, upgrade of physical administrative resources, regular training and retraining, enhanced e-library experience for students and lecturers, better access to ICT facilities and realistic age limit for academic staff of universities. These factors were considered key to the process of developing educational academic leadership in universities in the South South region of Nigeria. However, it also was discovered that most university administrators indicated that the item on realistic age limit for academic staff is an irrelevant issue which has little or no effect on the standard of teaching, learning and research in Nigerian universities.

This indicates that the prospects of developing an effective academic leadership in South South universities in Nigeria may not be realized if attention is not given to the welfare of university administrators across these universities. Similarly, the transmission of knowledge and skills to university administrators through regular training and retraining, professional development on educational

programs are essential to their development and the progress of university education in the country. Properly trained university administrators will be equipped with all the necessary information, knowledge and expertise needed to impact positive on the university system in South South Nigeria.

With such implications listed above all the manpower and human capital that has been invested into the development of academic leadership in universities, will be irrelevant if university administrators fail in their task of promoting efficiency and effectiveness within the system. This is a type of loss that the South South part of Nigeria cannot afford especially at this point in Nigeria's development when skilled graduates are needed from universities around the country. Therefore there is need to seek out measures and processes through which university administrators can be positive assets to the university system, assets that will improve the performance of universities and effectively enhance academic leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research, the following recommendations are made to solve the challenges experienced by university administrators in the development of effective academic leadership in Nigerian universities:

There is a need to improve employee welfare in universities in South South Nigeria, through adequate compensation, funding, welfare packages, seminars, workshops and training. This will ensure that university administrators are not left behind and are given equal attention as other employees in the oil and gas sector.

New university administrations techniques with programs that will improve teaching, learning and research in Nigerian universities should be adopted especially in federal and state universities in South South Nigeria. This can be achieved through better university administration, university administrative infrastructure, better access to ICT facilities by administrators and so on. This will reduce the rate of school dropout in the various institutions in the country, while providing an opportunity for students to have better access to practical and theoretical knowledge.

University administrators should regularly be given better remuneration and compensation packages that will motivate them to contribute their best into the job. This will also expand the pool of university administrators in

these universities because favourable remuneration packages will act as bait that will lure prospective job seekers into the profession. In turn, this will significantly improve the university to student ratio in these universities and an excellent student to university administrator ratio leads to improve and effective academic leadership.

An effective evaluation mechanism should be put in place that will monitor the progress and contributions of university administrators to the university system. This monitoring mechanism will act as a system of check and balance as well prevent any unnecessary lapses or wastages that may exist within the university administration, thus ensuring efficient academic leadership in universities.

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