

Political Influence in Administration of Public University Nigeria: Effects and Way Forward

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ABSTRACT: Universities by nature are to operate in a fully autonomous system. University autonomy is a principle upon which the university system normally operates and through which operational stability and actualization of goals of the university education are achieved. When autonomy is enthroned in the right perspective, it then facilitates academic freedom and accountability (NOUN, 2012). Unfortunately, public universities in Nigeria are politically influenced and their autonomy is not guaranteed. This paper examined the effects of political influence in the administration of public universities in Nigeria. The paper concludes that political influence is manifested in the administration of public tertiary institutions in the following ways: employment/recruitment of staff, the appointment of school administrators (VCs, Bursar, and Registrar), planning and establishment of public universities, location of universities, appointment of council members, expansion of National Universities Commission powers and admission of students into the various public universities. The paper also identified corruption, overconcentration of public universities, poor leadership, uneven development of public universities, and poor ranking of public universities as effects of political influence on the administration of Nigerian public universities.

KEYWORDS: Administration, Political influence, Public Universities.

INTRODUCTION

Tertiary education in Nigeria consists of universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and different post-secondary professional training institutions. The University of Ibadan, which was established in 1948 as a College of the University of London, admitted students from different parts of the country. After independence, the three regional governments established universities to provide a tertiary level of education. They provided adequate funds for facilities and recruitment of staff from all over the globe, thereby developing cosmopolitan and internationally competitive tertiary educational institutions. Sadly, these achievements of the Nigerian universities in the country between 1950 and the early 1980s have been eroded by factors that are internal and external to the system (Alemika, n.d.). The Nigerian university system is currently plagued by several problems that hinder it from serving expected roles in promoting national development. One factor that has negatively impacted university education in the country is political influence (Ogunode, 2020).

Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ewor, (2016) observed that Autonomy is a principle upon which the university education system tries to maintain its operational stability and actualization of goals. When autonomy is enthroned in the right perspective, it then facilitates academic freedom and accountability. However, in 1973, universities in Nigeria started what would be called the first threat letter to university autonomy. A trade dispute was ensured between the governing council and university teachers in 1973 over the issues of autonomy and review of the conditions of service. The review of their conditions of service was thwarted by top officials of the Federal Ministry of Education. The university lecturers were ordered by General Yakubu Gowon to go back to work or face dismissal and ejection from their official residences. This marks the beginning of political interferences and influence in the administration of the universities in Nigeria. The political influence in the administration of public universities in Nigeria in recent years has been identified as one of the factors giving rise to crises in university education. The influences are responsible primarily for the numerous problems hindering the development of public universities in Nigeria. Based on this background, this paper examines the effects of political influence on the administration of universities in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is anchored on the system theory. Systems theory holds that an organization is a social system of integrated parts. The theory was propounded by biophysicist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in 1920. The system was seen as a series of interrelated and interdependent parts in such a way that the interaction of any part of the system affects the whole system. That is, one part of the system must interact and depend on the other parts around it to function effectively. The system theory is relevant to the education system because the education system (school) is a system and the concept of interaction and interdependence of parts with the education system like all other social systems has identical properties with the other system. The schools are looked at in terms of

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the social system as complex interactive examined structurally and operationally. The theory is of immense help to this paper as the principal reflects in the objectives, functions, and the ultimate goal of the educational system in which they operate. This brings to the limelight the facades face when university administration is politically influenced by the government. It contends with the development processes.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of Political Influence

Olayinka (2018) defined political influence on education in the context of this study refers to the success of good educational policies issued by the government on the citizen, as formulation of policies is influenced by the political parties in power which sometimes being criticized by the opposition party. *Political influence* is the ability of private individuals and groups to influence, condition, shape, and there control authoritative decisions and actions. *Political influence* is the power sought for by politically active persons like legislators, ministers, leaders, etc. Political influence is an instrument by the political officers to control resources. Gbenu, (2012) posited that political influence is the use of power, influence, and authority by the government of the day, especially in the allocation of resources. Nnenna (2011) differentiate between positive and negative political influence, for positive political influence when proper decisions are taken in the distribution of resources, the appointment of principals, board of governors, members of the board, allocation of funds to schools, the appointment of staff personnel, good relation of the school community and proper welfare of students. The influence is negative where there is discrimination, favourism, and bias in the appointment of principals, promotion of teachers, the selection of the board of governors, appointment of the board of governors, allocation of funds, and lack of freedom on the parts of the principals, teachers, school-community relation member of the board of governors and board of members to express their opinions on matters affecting them.

Ogunode & Musa, (2020) observed that the activities of these governing councils are affecting the effective administration of the public universities in Nigeria. The alarming level of political interference in the administration of public universities in Nigeria is frightening. The visitors of the universities who are the chief executives (president/governor) have reserved powers to appoint the chancellors and constitute the governing council of various universities under them and select their cronies as members. These appointees in turn interfere in the internal management of the university such as the selection of VCs and other principal officers of the universities. This practice is seriously jeopardizing the administrations of universities in Nigeria. Ogunode (2020) submitted that another big challenge facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria is the political influence. The public universities have been designed to function with political officer holders or politicians in the country. The school administrators of public universities are answerable to the governing council constituted by the government to manage the affair of the public universities in the country. Onyeike and Owuama (2012) revealed among others that inadequacy of funds, planning with inaccurate statistical data, political interferences, misappropriation of funds, and shortage of qualified manpower were major limitations to the development of higher education in Nigeria.

PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

Ogunode (2020) viewed public universities are universities owned by the government. Public universities are universities established to provide post-secondary schools for Nigerians. Public universities are universities established by the act of parliament to serve the interest of the general public. Public universities deal with the provision of teaching, research, and community services. The objectives of the universities in Nigerian Higher education, including professional education has the following aims: the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and societies; the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate environment; the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; the acquisition of an overview of the local and external environments (FRN, 2014). Public universities in Nigeria are grouped into federal and state-owned universities. The federal universities are owned by the federal government of Nigeria while the state universities are owned by the state government. The total number of federal and state public universities is 49 and 57 respectively across the country (NUC, 2022). The federal government of Nigeria established the National universities commission to oversee the external administration and supervision of all universities in Nigeria. The administration of public universities in Nigeria takes two dimensions: external administration and internal administration. The external administration is done through the federal ministry and other regulatory agencies in the country. The external administration handle planning, policy formulation, programme accreditation, supervision, funding, and quality control of the universities. The internal administration is headed by the school administrators and other principal managers within the universities. The function of internal administration is to ensure the implementation of policies, coordinate, supervise and organize the human and materials resources of the universities to accomplish the objectives of the universities.

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UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

Ogunode (2020) defined university administration as the application of the universities' resources to implement the programme of the universities with the aims of realizing the objectives of the universities. University administration is the mobilization and arrangement of both human and material resources for the achievement of the university's goals. University administration is the effective use of the resources of the university to implement the teaching programme, research programme and community service of the universities. University administration is the deployment of the universities' resources to accomplish the universities' programme. The objectives of university administration include: to implement the programme of the universities as defined; to allocate resources for the implementation of the universities programme; to ensure implementation of teaching programme, to ensure implementation of research programme; to ensure delivery of quality community services programme, to ensure effective staff development, to ensure effective student administration, to ensure smooth implementation of academic calendar and to ensure quality education.

Manifestation of Political Influences in Nigerian Public Universities Administration

Political influence is manifesting in the following ways in the administration of public tertiary institutions: employment/recruitment, the appointment of school administrators (VCs, Bursar, Registrar) planning and establishment of public universities, location of universities, the appointment of council members, expansion of National Universities Commission power and admission of students.

Employment/Recruitment

Many politicians in Nigeria are using their political influence to influence employment of their cronies and friends into the public universities. Nnenne (2011) observed that government interference in school management to a large extent has influence the management in different ways. It is observed that in areas of employment within education sector, politics to a large extent determines who is to be taken and who is not to be employed. Ogunode, Ajape & Jegede (2020) opined that politicians have at least a slot in any recruitment processes in the Nigerian higher institutions. Sometimes their candidates may not qualify; they influence their employment against the policies of the institutions. The activities of political officeholders and politicians in the Nigerian higher institutions are threat to the sustainability of higher education policies. Alemika, (n.d.) submitted that absence of vertical and horizontal oversight and accountability within and across the education sector, resulting in poor oversight of admission policies and capacity as well as admission and employment in flagrant violations of the constitution and federal character policy, thereby turning universities into enclaves of ethnic and religious groups instead of universal and globally competitive centres of learning, research and scholarship. Alemika, (n.d.) opined that absence of effective oversight of incompetent and unaccountable management officials and organs (principal officers, Senate, A & PC committees, faculty and departments boards and heads) due to weak oversight and primordial considerations. Marcus (2005) corroborates this opinion that in recent years governors have emerged as visible, active policy makers with significant influence on university education especially in area of staff employment, appointment and promotions.

Appointment of Universities' Vice-Chancellors

The appointment of many public universities are politically influenced in Nigeria. The government of the day uses the council members to influence the choice of their candidate. The act regulating the responsibilities of the governing council empowers the council to appoint the vice-chancellors. The Act stipulates that: "The Governing Council of a university shall be free in the discharge of its functions and exercise of its responsibilities for the good management, growth and development of the university." "Section 3 (4) of the same 2003 Amendment reposes on Council the power to appoint the vice-chancellor of the university. The Minister of Education, Malam Adamu Adamu as reported by Guardian (2021), has accused some state governors of hijacking the process of appointing vice-chancellors for Federal Universities, due to apathy in the selection processes. Adamu described this vested interest as responsible for the unimaginable crises in the selection processes of the vice-chancellors for those particular universities in the country, citing the development as leading to "unnecessary frictions and tension in the institutions". Also, Alemika, (n.d.) noted that politics and emphasis on the appointment of indigenes as vice-chancellors and other principal officers above the criteria of merit, integrity, and academic excellence is among the problem hindering development of universities in Nigeria. Ekundayo and Ajayi, (2009) observed that universities these days are not totally free from the hand of politics outside the university system. Government of the day, most especially in the state-owned varsities, interfere a lot in terms of selection and choice of the chief executive, deans, departmental heads, directors of programmes and above all the selection of vice-chancellors. A situation whereby the members of the university are not totally free to choose who their head should be, without government intervention would not augur well for the university system. Alemika, (n.d.) observed that many universities in the country serve more as sanctuary for political, ethnic and religious miscreants, many of whom are at the helms of affairs, and whose decisions and conducts threaten national unity, security and development. Omemu (2015) observed that qualification and hard work which are supposed to be the parameters for the appointment of principal officers in higher institutions of learning are hardly adhered to when political forces sets in. Pinga, Ivase, & Nomayu (n.d.) established in their study that politics has significant influence on appointment of principal officers and students' admission process in higher institutions in Benue State.

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Planning and Establishment of Universities

The planning and establishment of public universities in Nigeria are in most cases under the political influence of the political actors in the government. Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ewor, (2016) submitted that there has been political interference in the establishment of universities in Nigeria. With the return of civil rule in 1999, the spate of government's establishment of federal universities continued, beginning in 2002 when the Obasanjo administration resuscitated the National Open University, Lagos which was suspended in 1984. The administration also established the Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE), Effurun in 2007. The political crises that surrounded the establishment of this university in particular began to manifest when the Yar'Adua's regime attempted to relocate the university to Kaduna State. This attempt was met with brick walls as it was vehemently opposed by the people of the Niger Delta region through students' protests, and threats from South-South Governors' Forum. Ololube, (2013) argued that the existing political arrangement has influenced the control over educational planning in Nigeria. Olayinka (2018) opined that planning, administration and management of educational sector are influenced by the political party in power. Gbenu, (2012) posited that legislature has a direct influence on the planning processes as the body responsible for policy formulation on educational development. Generally, the legislature is compelled to serve the interest of other special interest groups. There is therefore the possibility of conflicts between legislature and the rational ideas proposed by the technical planners which has been based on statistical analysis of the education system.

Location of Public Universities

Location of universities in Nigeria has come under great political influence. Universities are not located based on needs and national interest but based on political interest and influence. Okoli, Oghondah, & Ewor (2016) observed that there has been political interference in the establishment of universities in Nigeria. With the return of civil rule in 1999, the spate of government's establishment of Federal universities continued, beginning in 2002 when the Obasanjo administration resuscitated the National Open University Nigeria Lagos, which was suspended in 1984. Ogunode & Ajape (2021) and Ogunode, & Omenuko, (2021) opined that political influences is a major problem hindering effective planning of universities education in Nigeria. Nigerian politicians both at legislative arm and executive arm of government are always influencing siting of universities in their states, local government and towns. Strategic planning on universities distribution are always been alter to favour politician in power. Educational planners are influenced to site universities in their communities. Nigerian politician have taking establishment of universities as a constituent projects. Bills are sponsored every year by honourable members National assembly for universities establishment in their state and senatorial district. Ogunode & Ajape (2021) observed politicians both at the federal and states level especially those at the position of president and state governors influences location of higher institutions to their states and communities to attract development and achieve political gain by altering the national document on siting of educational institutions in the country. Presently, a university of transportation has been sited in Katsina state, the state of the current president. Ogunode & Ajape (2021) stated that a *bill to establish Aerospace and Aeronautics University in Oka Akoko, Ondo State*, passed second reading on the floor of the Nigerian Senate. The bill was sponsored by Senator Prof. Boroface representing northern senatorial district in Ondo state. The university would be sited in the home town of the senator in Ondo state. Another example was given by Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ewor, (2016) who noted that the political crises that surrounded the establishment of this university manifested when the Yar'Adua's regime attempted to relocate the university to Kaduna State. This attempt was met with brick walls as it was vehemently opposed by the people of the Niger Delta region through students' protests, and threats from South-South Governors Forum. Also, in 2007, there was a proposed plan by Governor Rotimi Amaechi to relocate the Rivers State University of Science and Technology from its present site in Nkpolu to a permanent site in Ikwerre Local Government Area, as part of the Greater Port Harcourt City Project (The Port Harcourt Telegraph, 2012 in Nyewusira, 2014). It is pertinent to note here that Governor Amaechi hails from Ikwerre Local Government Area.

Appointment of Council Members/ Visitation Panel

The government political influence in the administration of the universities is also demonstrated in the establishment of the act giving the government the power to appoint the governing council of the federal and state universities. This act gives the government the power to influence the policies and decision in the internal administration of the universities since their appointee constitutes the larger percentage in the membership. Daniel-Kalioi (2019) observed that Governing Council in a public university is usually made up of both external and internal members comprising of the lay public and representatives of variety of interests and the University Senate. Its composition is stipulated by law in the autonomy bill of 2003 and has the Pro-Chancellor who is appointed by the government and made the Chairman of Council, the Vice Chancellor, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, one person from the Federal Ministry responsible for education, 4 persons representing a variety of interest and broadly representing the National Council of Ministers, 4 persons appointed by the Senate from among members, 2 persons appointed by the Congregation from among its members, 1 person appointed by Convocation from among its members. Daniel-Kalioi, (2019) also opined that the Council is the supreme governing authority responsible for those policy decisions which have financial implications, general management of the affairs of the university, and the control of the property and expenditure of the university. The Council has powers to do anything which in its opinion, is calculated to facilitate the carrying on of the activities of the university including the regulation of the

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constitution and conduct of the university. According to Daniel-Kalioi, (2019) the organogram of the universities shows that universities has three levels of management viz; the political, the Administrative and the Academic. The political level consists of the university Governing Council, the senate, the congregation and convocation. This is considered political because the heads of these groups are all political appointees. Ademola et al (2014) opined that a good number had no business being in a university not to talk of being in the Council. They are merely politicians pursuing the interest of their sponsors in most cases. This portends danger for a system with an unending list of challenges. Another area where the government applied the political influence in the administration of the public universities is the used of visitation panels. Ekundayo and Ajayi, (2009) and Adegbite (2007), submitted that another area of political interference is constitution of Visitation Panels by the Visitor at wills instead of the minimum five years intervals, the main aim of which is to witch-hunt or crucifies the vice-chancellors and the university authorities. Ajayi and Ayodele (2002), observed that the government involvement in university governance has been a point of strife between the government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) for some time now. Babalola et al. (2007), opined that university autonomy and academic freedom has over the years been a recurring issue in the ASUU's demand from the federal government.

Expansion of National universities Commission (NUC) Powers

The federal government in order to gain more control of the administration and management of the public universities in Nigeria enriched the powers of the National Universities Commission to make policies and direct the affairs of the universities in Nigeria. Adamu (n.d.) noted that through expanding the powers of the Nigerian Universities Commission, the federal government has been able to obtain greater academic and financial control over the university system, reversing a process of devolution that gave the states increasing responsibility for higher as well as primary and secondary education, and still not succeeded in enticing many universities to change their behaviors. Part of the explanation is that public universities tend to become less rather than more efficient as the resources to support the universities diminish. This is particularly likely to happen when universities lose both academic and financial autonomy and, thus, lack the flexibility they need to implement controversial reforms. Adamu (n.d.) went further and stated that the governments cannot exercise effective direction of higher education systems unless the mechanisms of control are linked to the financing of institutions and/or their students. The costs of controlling a higher education system like Brazil's with large private higher sector may be unaffordable, requiring governments to be selective about the domains of training, level of instruction, or kinds of institutions they wish to influence. Second, powers to manipulate the behavior of institutions must be reinforced by the availability of discretionary funding. However, third, as the experience of the Nigeria suggests, incentives will not be successful unless the universities have the autonomy to reform themselves (Holm-Nielsen and Eisemon, 1995).

Admission of Students

Admission in some public universities are hacked by political officers. They sent their candidates to various vice chancellors. Ogunode, Ajape & Jegede (2020) opined that politicians in Nigeria influence admissions for their family members and themselves even when they don't meet the standard. Alemika, (n.d.) opined that appointment and promotion of staff as well as admission and assessment of students at the tertiary levels, especially the public universities, are heavily tainted by corruption, nepotism and egregious discrimination in favour of indigenes of states in which universities are located, beyond and in violation of prescribed guidelines. The violation is perpetrated with impunity because JAMB officers are either complicit or ineffective. Discriminations like this create disaffection towards the country by their victims, with implications for national solidarity and security. Another challenge facing the management of higher institutions in Nigeria is the involvement of political forces in admission process. It is evident that much preference has been given to political considerations rather than due process and merit system in students' admission into higher institutions in Nigeria (Pinga, Ivase, & Nomayu, n.d.; Osuji, 2011). Aboh (2014) noted that in Nigeria and other corrupt countries of the globe, admissions are sometimes given to students on the grounds that such students are from the same family, religious background or political affiliation with the person in authority.

Effects of Political Influence on Public University Administration

There are many effects of political influence on the administration of Nigerian public universities. Some of them include; corruption, overconcentration, poor leadership, uneven development and poor ranking of public universities.

Corruption

The political influence of government on the administration and management of university education is also responsible to the high rate of corruption in the university system. Ogunode (2020) opined that the corruption in the public universities in Nigeria is another problem preventing effective administration of public universities in Nigeria. The high rate of corruption in the Nigerian public universities has hindered effective administration of the universities. Many public universities are in the present condition because of the corruption in the system. Funds provided for implementation of programme, provision of infrastructural facilities, employment of staff and programme development ended up been looted or diverted into private account. Dimensions of corruption in Nigerian universities included students, lecturers, non-academic staff and administrators. The shapes of corruption among students included bribing of lecturers for unmerited grades, cultism, examination malpractice, attacks on lecturers for stopping students from indulging in examination malpractice, fiscal extortion from innocent students by fellow students who form themselves

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into “lecturers’ boys” according to Chinyere, & Chukwuma (2017). Forms of corruption among universities lecturers included demanding huge amount of money, sex from female students for high grade, etc. Among non-teaching staff, the shades of corruption included monetary extortion from students before they see their results, demanding of money from unsuspecting parents in the guise that they are lecturers with a promise to secure admission for their children/wards, they also act as agents for lecturers, receiving money from students for higher grades after examination. At the administrator's level, shades of corruption included misappropriation and misapplication of fund meant for capital projects, offer of admission to undeserving students for a fee while deserving candidates are by-passed, amongst others as mentioned by Chinyere, & Chukwuma (2017). Punch (2020) observed that the little funds that go into the universities are stolen. In 2018, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project claimed that there were allegations of corruption in several federal universities relating to the unfair allocation of grades; contract inflation; truncation of staff's salary on the payroll; employment of unqualified staff; certificate scandal; examination malpractice; sexual harassment; and issuance of results for expelled students to graduate. Daniel-Kalioi, (2019) observed that in the environment of massive corruption and mismanagement of the economy, Nigerian universities’ leadership have plethora of challenges to contend with which include politicization of the appointment of Vice Chancellors, poor leadership quality of some Vice Chancellors, centralization of university administration, managerial assumption of university leaders, diminishing financial resources, problems of access and equity, lack of vision and integration of universities into national planning by political leaders, limitations on university autonomy and academic freedom, problems of ineffectiveness and inefficiency, brain-drain, limited access to technologies, limited infrastructural facilities, limited qualified teachers, lack of innovation in teaching and research, incessant industrial actions by unions, patrimonial networks among university administrators, explosion of students population, absence of a standardized system that rewards hard work and productivity, high fees among private universities, non-availability of scholarships, student loans and grants, poor quality of education and poor students attitude to learning, inadequate research, governance and sectarianism, mobility of academics, inadequate quality assurance, etc.

Overconcentration of Universities

Overconcentration of universities in a particular senatorial district, in some states and in some geo-political regions is the effects of political influence in the universities administration and management in Nigeria. Universities planning, establishment and location are politically motivated and influenced in Nigeria. For instance, federal universities, all the 36 states and Abuja have them, with some having more than one. i.e. Borno 2, Delta 2, Kaduna 3, Kano 2, and Lagos 2. All the 36 states also own at least a university each, but Bayelsa have 3, Edo 2, Gombe 2, Imo 2, Kano 2, Ogun 3, Ondo 3, Oyo 2 and Rivers 2. Ogunode & Ajape (2021) stated that presidents, state governors, ministers and honourable members are found with the habit of influencing the educational planners and administrators of higher institutions to locate higher institutions to their communities. This act has made the sitting of higher institutions not evenly distributed in the country. Some states have many higher institutions than the others.

Uneven Development of Universities

Uneven development of universities in Nigeria is traced to the political influence of allocation of more financial resources to some universities. These universities who got higher financial allocation attracts more development than those with less financial resources. For instance, some higher institutions in political zones are more developed in term of infrastructural facilities than other political zones.

Poor Leadership of Universities

The political influence of the government in the administration of Nigerian universities have led to weak leadership in universities system. Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ewor, (2016) observed that in an era where many key university appointments and decisions are made outside the university, meritocracy is eroded and replaced with nepotism, godfatherism, lobbying and political patronage. This usually results to system where the most eligible persons are often frustrated and left without promotions. The survival of the university education system is directly proportional to or to a large extent dependent on the institutionalization of autonomy. Majority of the universities are underdeveloped because the best brain are not in the system to manage them for success. None of Nigerian universities are rated among the best five hundred in the World ranking. This poor performance is due to weak administrators and other challenges. Ogunode (2020) noted that appointment of weak administrators in the Nigerian public universities is another big challenge facing the administration of public universities in Nigeria. Many universities’ administrators appointed to head the public universities are not qualified and less exposed to handle the administration and management of universities. Udida, Bassey, Udofia, & Egbona (2009) concludes that some individuals appointed as vice chancellors of some university are weak, not competent and lack administrative potentials; such appointees must possess administrative qualities and must lead by example. The leader must have integrity, must be knowledgeable, and practice modern types of management leadership styles. He or she must be visionary and ready to adjust to situations in the system. The performance of the administrator should be sustained through the proper utilization of material and human resources in the achievement of the institutional goals and objectives. A lot of higher education system managers do not poses the charisma, or good human relations needed for effective and efficient leadership. As a result of the poor leadership and ineffective style of administration, a lot of programme of activities are not carried out in such institutions such as provision of grant for research and publications, staff welfare is neglected, no adequate control of

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staff and students, no vision for the university. Such leaders also do not have the zeal for supervision and monitoring of institutional activities. This can affect the system's performance in that, workers can result to a nonchalant attitude toward work and hence no sustainability or continuity of good track records of performance in the system. Nigerian Higher Educational System need leaders who can position it to an envying height of success and progress, this contributing to society's quest for self-reliance (Udida, Bassey, Udofia, & Egbona, 2009 cited Ujomu, 2001). Nwachukwu, Stella & Obaoda (2018) revealed that the lack of institutional leaders' values like integrity, effectiveness, competence, honesty, accountability and fairness explains the unsuccessful and ineffective management of universities in Nigeria. Daniel-Kalioi, (2019) pointed out that it is however painful to specifically observe that one major leadership issue that plagues the management of the university system is the quality of leadership provided internally by some Vice Chancellors and the other officers. Dzurgba (2008) observed that appointment of members of governing councils is subject to occasional abuse by visitors or governors who choose to play politics with the university education. When visitors or governors appoint council members base on religion or ethnic sentiments, hence the morale of lecturers and students dampens and lowers effective and efficient of the management of the public universities. Dzurgba went further maintains that it gives the visitors or governors direct in route into the internal affairs of the management of the public universities. Nwaka, (n.d.) opined that appointment to most of the positions in higher institutions are sometimes politically-motivated, hence mediocre staff are appointed to manage affairs though, inefficiently and as a result education processes and resources are wasted and consequently, poor goal achievement.

Poor Rating of Public Universities

The low rate of Nigerian public universities can also be linked to the government domination of the universities administrations. The university administration and management in Nigeria are politically influenced and this is causing a lot of problems in the system. The best brain are not appointed to manage the system, necessary resources are not provided and the political will to provide the adequate funding for the development of the universities is lacking in the political officeholders. Yawe, Ivagher and Ijov (2015) submitted that the political interference in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria has degenerated so much that credibility is completely eroded, as principal officers of higher institutions such as vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, provosts, rectors and registrars among others are appointed on the basis of political affiliations, sectionalism, nepotism, tribalism as well as religious beliefs. The implication of qualification not been the yardstick for the appointment of such principal officers is that any Tom-Dick and Harry can be given such sensitive positions which may make the entire system ineffective and inefficient. **Conclusion**
This paper concludes that political influence is manifested in the administration of public tertiary institutions in the following ways: employment/recruitment of staff, appointment of school administrators (VCs, Bursar, Registrar), planning and establishment of public universities, location of universities, appointment of council members, expansion of National Universities Commission powers and admission of students into the various public universities. The paper also identified corruption, overconcentration of public universities, poor leadership, uneven development of public universities and poor ranking of public universities as effects of political influence on the administration of Nigerian public universities.

Way Forward

The following have been recommended:

1. The University Governing Council, Senate and those saddled with the responsibility of Vice chancellors' appointment should always endeavour to appoint the right calibre of persons to such leadership position; they should be those who have administrative pedigree of effectiveness in goals attainment. Such persons should be highly transformative in leadership behaviour, intellectually competent; and should possess analytical and proactive skills to be able to manage the dynamic institution of a University system. Adetunji and Ogunleye (2015), concluded that the Vice Chancellor is therefore not expected to be appointed on the basis of his/her political connection but on his/her ability to cope with complexities of the institution, to devise structures and systems that produce order and harmony and manage available resources effectively and efficiently in order to achieve the desired educational goals if transformation is expected in the university system.
2. The criticality of good leadership in the management of Nigerian universities cannot be over-emphasized. For instance, the issue of gross under-funding of the educational system in the country rendering the university system incapacitated is not going to be over very soon from the look of things. It has been there even in the times of the oil boom in Nigeria. Therefore, to achieve any form of improvement in the face of dwindling resources, the system will require a prudent and resourceful leader to optimally manage the available resources of the university. When the leadership, management and governance of the university is effective and universities are granted some level of autonomy, free from political interferences and internal due process is followed, then most of the challenges of both policy implementation and leadership in universities will be surmounted (Daniel-Kalioi, 2019).
3. For the National University Commission (NUC), Oluremi & Oyewole (2014) recommended NUC as a body and restore full autonomy to the Universities. Each University should be allowed to select their candidates for the positions of Vice Chancellors and other important administrative positions in the Universities, NUC should only act as an advisory body and information centre instead of a supervisory body which it now occupies. In developing countries such as France, Virtual and Japan, financial autonomy have been granted to individual universities. The NUC should be religious about its accreditation role, and ensure that its monitoring and

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evaluation strategies are improved upon. The Nigerian University system must be ready to operate by the rules by giving total compliance to NUC regulatory roles on minimum academic standard.

4. For funding, Bassey, (2002) submitted that the life wire of every virile organization is funding. Higher education in 21st century Africa requires a lot of money both in cash and in other resources for effective functioning. Billions of naira are needed for buildings of lecture theatres offices, laboratories, workshops, hostels of residence for students, etc. The workshops and laboratories require costly machines and chemicals for use by students. Incidentally poor funding has been said to be the bane of Nigeria's educational planning, especially its higher education.

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