

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Influence of political appointments on the management of higher education in Nigeria**

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The increasing role of politics in education is causing serious setback in the education sector. Political influence therefore seems to hinder the efficiency of higher education management. The major thrust of this study is to investigate the influence of political appointments on the management of higher education in Nigeria. Two research hypotheses guided the study. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 123,658 teaching and non-teaching staff from 151 universities, polytechnics/monotechnics and colleges of education in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. A sample of 600 teaching and non-teaching staff was randomly selected from 12 higher institutions in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. A 10-item structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Influence of Political Appointment Questionnaire (CAMPQ)" was used for data collection. This was pilot tested for internal consistency and reliability using 20 teaching and non-teaching staff from two higher educations that were not part of the sampled population. The data were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha correlation co-efficient which yielded 0.89. Chi-square test of goodness of fit at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that political appointment has significant influence on efficiency and effectiveness in the management of higher education in Nigeria. It was recommended among others that politicians should be advised to stop interfering in the appointment of administrators and recruitment of lecturers so that the education system will be autonomous in selecting those who have the requisite qualification and skills to work and ensure effectiveness efficiency in the education sector.

**Key words:** Efficiency, effectiveness, higher education, management, political appointments.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education plays a vital role in human capital formation. It raises the productivity and efficiency of individuals and thus produces skilled manpower that is capable of leading the economy towards the path of sustainable economic development. Higher education plays a key role in the economic and social development of any nation. This is particularly the case in today's globalized information and knowledge-based economy. No country can expect to successfully integrate in and benefit from the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy without a well-educated workforce. The stakes are particularly high for Sub-Saharan Africa, given the low level education attainment of most country's labour force and urgent need for

sustained economic growth at a high level in order to reduce poverty (Ojelede and Fadokon, 2006).

The term politics according to Okunamiri (2005) is defined as consisting of struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues. Meyerson and Bonafield (1955) in Okwori (2012) regard politics as the activity by which an issue is agitated or settled. Education has been defined by Akpakwu (2012), as the process of bringing desirable changes into the behaviour of human beings. It is also the process of acquiring knowledge and habits through instruction or study in a formal educational setting. Higher education according to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), is the education given after secondary



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education in universities, colleges of education, the polytechnics, mono-technics, including those institutions offering correspondence courses. The goal of higher education in Nigeria as specified in section 6 of the National Policy on Education (2004) include:

“The development of individuals through high level relevant manpower training, in collection of proper values for survival of individuals to understand their environment, acquisition of physical and intellectual skills for self reliance, to promote national and international understanding and interaction”

Educational management on the other hand is defined by Akpakwu (2008) as the ability of the educational manager to judiciously utilize the human, material, financial and time resources towards the efficient and effective achievement of the objectives of educational institutions. The importance of management in education cannot be overemphasized. It is with an efficient and effective management that educational managers can plan, formulate policies, identify programmes, organize staff, facilities and finance, control, coordinate and direct the activities and affairs to achieve the predetermined goals of education institutions (Akpakwu, 2012).

There has been allegation in recent times that higher educational institutions in Nigeria has lost their quality in terms of teaching because many fresh graduates are no longer competent to perform as expected of them in the society. The students, on one hand, are no longer willing to study hard to achieve excellence, especially as there seem to be quick avenues to graduation, while the teachers, on the other hand, are faced with job dissatisfaction (Okwewugbe and Omoraka, 2005) in Ogbonnaya (2009). The influence of political appointments on the management of higher education in Nigeria cannot guarantee quality education in this kind of atmosphere. In order to improve the quality of higher education, there is the dire need to overhaul the educational system with the intent and purpose of achieving its purpose and objectives in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the educational system. The failure of the higher education system to produce quality graduates that would be self-reliant has defeated the strategic position as an anchor of accelerated national development. It is on this background that this study is set to examine the influence of political appointments on the management of higher education in Nigeria.

### Statement of the problem

Stakeholders in the education sector in Nigeria especially staff, parents and students of universities have expressed worry over the influence of politics on the appointments of executives in Nigeria which seems to make higher education system loss its efficiency and effectiveness as it has necessitated this study by investigating the positive or negative influence of political appointments on the management of higher education in Nigeria.

### Research Hypotheses

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

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant influence of political appointments on efficiency in the management of higher education in Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant influence of political appointments on effectiveness in the management of higher education in Nigeria.

### Literature review

The term politics according to Okunamiri (2005) consists of struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues. Most of the earliest definitions of politics concentrated on such social units as government bodies, the parliament, the ministries, the presidency, etc. However, the most recent approaches to the study and definition of politics emphasize units of behaviours, that is those events and acts that are political in nature whatever, the institutions in which they occur. Current definitions of politics tend to satisfy three essential ingredients namely; (I) the event of authority and control (II) the predominance of public interest and action, and (III) the element of institutionalized legitimacy and accountability in the way activities are performed. Thus, politics is seen as the act of who gets what and when in the affairs of a group (Okwori, 2012).

The term management according to Nwankwo (1989) in Nwankwo (2014) is defined as the arrangement of resources (human, material and information) available for education and carefully using them systematically to achieve educational objectives. Drucker (1999) equally related his concept of management to the resources/result context as the process of reaching organizational goals by working with and through people and other organizational resources. Management according to Okwori (2012) is a task of planning, coordinating, motivating and controlling the efforts of others towards predetermined objectives.

Higher or tertiary education on the other hand is referred to as the education given after secondary education in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics as well as those institutions offering correspondence courses. Tertiary or higher education according to Scott (2005) has two meanings first, it means the next academic level (without research component) after secondary education. Second, it signifies the system of institutions that provides post secondary school courses and also engages in research.

The word efficiency appears to have originated from economics. The concept arose from the fact that every organized human activity start by defining objectives to be achieved or output expected. In order to achieve the objectives, certain inputs must be available. Efficiency,

according to Arinze in Bosah and Eneasator (1996) is defined in terms of optimal relationship between inputs and output in an enterprise. We usually say an activity is performed efficiently if a given quantity of output is obtained with a minimum number of inputs or, alternatively if a given quantity of inputs yields maximum outputs. The authors further stated that in education, a number of inputs (teachers, students, contents, buildings, instructional materials, etc) are combined in different ways to achieve educational ends. In other words, various inputs are transformed in order to achieve outputs.

According to Cordelia (1997), political appointees who are not core educational managers or career officers manage the affairs of education in a way that it does not allow for efficiency in terms of ensuring the quality of learning for the learners. Cordelia further stated that efficiency will require the improvement on the quality of teaching such that the students are able to perform well in their various examinations. However, politicians often hijack most appointment of senior managers like in the higher institutions where the appointment of Vice Chancellors is strictly political. They do not care to know if the person been appointed has the requisite qualification to deliver.

Effectiveness is a concept that cuts across many disciplines. For instance, we talk about the effectiveness of an educational system, the effectiveness of an accounting system, the effectiveness of political programme, the effectiveness of a Bank or a financial institution and the effectiveness of a community organization. Effectiveness is normally defined in terms of the achievement of objectives. For example, a senior secondary school is said to have achieved its objectives if its students perform well in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination. We usually say that an activity is performed effectively if the objective set out is achieved.

Adegun (2002) observed that political interference in the educational sector in terms of appointments of school administrators especially the ones who are not qualified to head the school has been a factor inhibiting attainment of goals in tertiary education. Singh (2006) school climate in terms of the quality of administrator and the teachers employed is assumed to have some effect upon the success of a school in accomplishing its objectives. He further observed that it is difficult to achieve educational objectives today because, favoritism and sectional interest are factors in the educational system recruitment exercise by politicians instead of meritocracy that would have ensure quality personnel that would in turn ensure quality education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 123,658 teaching and

non-teaching staff from 151 universities, polytechnics/monotechnics and colleges of education in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. A sample of 600 teaching and non-teaching staff was randomly selected from 12 higher institutions in the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample size because the population was heterogeneous. A 10-item structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled "Influence of Political Appointment Questionnaire (CAMPQ)" was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by experts in Educational Management and Tests and Measurement from the Faculty of Education, Benue State University, Makurdi. The questionnaire was trial tested using 20 teaching and non-teaching staff from two higher educations that were not part of the sampled population. The data collected was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha correlation co-efficient which yielded 0.89. The coefficient indicated high internal consistency which proved that the instrument was reliable to be used for field work. The research hypotheses were tested using chi-square test of goodness of fit at 0.05 level of significance.

## **RESULTS**

### **Hypotheses one**

There is no significant influence of political appointments on efficiency in the management of higher education in Nigeria. Table 1 showed that the descriptive statistics of percentages and the inferential statistics of chi-square were used to test if there is no significant influence of political appointments on efficiency in the management of higher education in Nigeria. The results showed that 84% of the respondents agreed that there is a significant influence of political appointments on efficiency in the management of higher education in Nigeria as against 16% students who disagreed. Table 1 also showed that the chi-square calculated value of 109.94 was greater than the chi-square table value of 3.84 checked at 0.05 level of significance and at one degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of political appointments on efficiency in the management of higher education in Nigeria.

### **Hypotheses Two**

There is no significant influence of political appointments on effectiveness in the management of higher education in Nigeria. Table 2 showed that the descriptive statistics of percentages and the inferential statistics of chi-square were used to test if there is no significant influence of political appointments on effectiveness in the management of higher education in Nigeria. The results

**Table 1.** Chi-square test on the influence of political appointments on efficiency in the management of higher education in Nigeria.

Opinions	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	df	Level of sig	$\chi^2$ -cal	$\chi^2$ -tab	Decision
No Influence	97(16%)	300(50%)	1	0.05	109.94	3.84	Significant
Influence	531(84%)	300(50%)					

Values in parentheses are percentages ( $\chi^2 = 109.94$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.05 > 0.00$ )

**Table 2.** Chi-square on the influence of political appointments on effectiveness in the management of higher education in Nigeria's Performance.

Opinions	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level of sig	$\chi^2$ -cal	$\chi^2$ -tab	Decision
No Influence	162(27%)	300(50%)	1	0.05	134.79	3.84	Significant
Influence	438(73%)	300(50%)					

Values in parentheses are percentages ( $\chi^2 = 134.79$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p = 0.05 > 0.00$ )

showed that 73% of the respondents agreed that there is a significant influence of political appointments on effectiveness in the management of higher education in Nigeria as against 27% students who disagreed. Table 2 also showed that the chi-square calculated value of 134.79 was greater than the chi-square table value of 3.84 checked at 0.05 level of significance and at one degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of political appointments on effectiveness in the management of higher education in Nigeria.

## DISCUSSION

The finding of this study revealed that there is a significant influence of political appointments on efficiency in the management of higher education in Nigeria. This finding agrees with the views of Adegun (2002) who observes political interference in the educational sector in terms of appointments of school administrators especially the ones who are not qualified to head the school, has been a factor inhibiting attainment of goals in tertiary education.

The result also showed that there is a significant influence of political appointments on effectiveness in the management of higher education in Nigeria. This finding is in agreement with the opinion of Cordelia (1997) who states that political appointees who are not core educational managers or career officers manage the affairs of education in a way that it does not allow for efficiency in terms of ensuring the quality of learning for the learners. Cordelia further stated that efficiency will require the improvement on the quality of teaching such that the students are able to perform well in their various examinations. However, politicians often hijack most

appointment of senior managers like in the higher institutions where the appointment of Vice Chancellors is strictly political. They do not care to know if the person been appointed has the requisite qualification to deliver.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it was concluded that political appointment has significant influence on efficiency and effectiveness in the management of higher education in Nigeria.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Politicians should be advised to stop interfering in the appointment of administrators and recruitment of lecturers so that the education system will be autonomous in selecting those who have the requisite qualification and skills to work and ensure efficiency in the education sector.
2. Government should enact a law that only professionals or career officers who have both theoretical and practical knowledge of educational management should be appointed or employed to manage or teach in higher education so as to ensure that the goals or objectives of this level of education is met which is what effectiveness stands for.

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