COMMITTEE SYSTEM, A TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH SOUTH GEO-POLITICAL ZONE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract
The study examined the committee system a tool for effective management of the university in South-South zone of Nigeria. Some of literatures are reviewed for expert opinions, two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were statistically tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study was anchored on role theory, the study used a descriptive design, the population of the study was 1900 lecturers drawn from 3 public universities and 3 private universities. The sample of the study was 360 persons making forty percent of the total population. The instrument that was used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled committee system and effective management of university questionnaire. The result of the study shows that the university system has been highly reutilized and such meeting does not provide time for the implementation of decisions, there is a significant difference between the lecturer of public and private universities in their perception of the contribution of the committee in the goal attainment of the university, a significant difference existed between the lecturer of public and private universities in their perception of the problems encountered by the committee in terms of decision making. The study concludes that the committee system of the university is important for the effective management of the university hence it is an administrative technique. Recommendation includes the following, members of the committee should be appointed on merit, a member of a committee should not serve in many committees.

Key words: committee, effective, management, university.

A. Introduction
The term committee simply refers to a group of people officially delegated to perform a specific function (Nwafor, 1998). The committee system especially in the institution of higher learning can be described as administrative technique that could be used to facilitate management activities. Eze and Ejo in Nwafor (1998) stated that the committee system has become an inherent ingredient in universities throughout the world. Patterson (2005) asserted that the responsibilities of the university system are enormous that the committee system is required to facilitate most of the administrative functions. The committee is made up of limited number of people of participants, and they are to deliberate on critical issues and thus make recommendation which will eventually enhance decision-making of the higher body.

Nwafor (1998) posited that “university community is a multi-faceted area with a high degree of inter-relationship which calls for a wider range of decision to be handled by committee system. The committee system of the university is an instrument that is used to facilitate the administration of the university. In fact, it is prescribed by the legislature that establishes the university, in this regard, it is reasonable to state that the committee system is a sine qua non of university administration. One of the primary objectives of administration is to mobilize resources towards the achievement of goals.

Administration, according to Okai (2013), is the coordination of human and material resources towards the realization of goals. Wali (2017) was in support of Okai when he asserted that administration is the component part of management. The university is a school organization that is established to some stated goals. It is one of the social organizations that are structured to shape the destiny of man and that of the nation. The university organization is a citadel of learning where students are trained to acquire a specialized skill in some specific areas. The administration of the university is run by the committee system.
The ever-increasing amount of time taken by the committee and the growing complexities of the committee system of the university organization is a subject of great interest. The committee takes major decisions of the university. To this end, a huge amount of time and energy are devoted to committee work. Is the committee system of the university organization effective? Is the amount of time and energy devoted to committee work justified? There is a feeling that the administration of the university by the committee system has increased the workload of the professional administrator and academic staff who served in the various committees. The system which has become highly reutilized in the frequency of the occurrence of committee meetings at various levels of decision making has left the administrators and other members of the committee no time to implement some of the major decision of the meeting before they have the next meeting or before the next meeting is done. The dilemma is that non-implementation of key decision by the committee will result to university ineffectiveness. In evacuating the committee behaviour in the university organization, administrators and other stakeholders are often tempted to use the concept of effectiveness.

According to Chester I. Benard in Ukeje, Okorie and Nwagbara (1992), an action is effective when a specific desired end is attained. As he puts it, effectiveness relates to the accomplishment of cooperative purpose, which is social and non-personal in character. One can reasonably posit that successful managerial acts, that is those acts or directives that are accepted and followed by group members are efficient. That suggests that successful managerial acts that contribute to group or individual satisfaction are effective.

To properly appreciate the place of committees in the university administration, it is necessary to understand the basic tenets underlying the effectiveness of university administration. In fact, the committee system is inevitable of the university must achieve its stated goals, particularly in terms of providing the relevant infrastructures for the attainment of quality education. It is not surprising that university organization can achieve its goals through effective committee system of the university.

The growing complexity of universities in Nigeria and the challenges poses to the management makes the committee system inevitable. This is to ensure the realization of university goals. The committee system will help to vet the management challenges in the area of staff accommodation, the academic planning, inaugural lecture, appointment and promotion committee, welfare committee, disciplinary committee, examination committee, and time table committee. The growth of committees in the university system has been phenomenal. In fact, what is more exciting about the committee is that they did not just come into existence in the year they appeared on the calendar. Indeed, it is pertinent to state that some of the committees such as Academic Planning and Institute of Education had been in existence but were merely adopted by senate.

However, there is a feeling that the committee is stepping beyond the bounds of policy. This is because of the amount of time taken up by committees in making decision. Though the impact of the committees in the administration of university cannot be overemphasized, the dilemma is that in spite of the time up by the committees and the doubts about the effectiveness of the committee system, the committee seem to multiply yearly year and no one seems to have a clue as to how to address the problem of the committee system which has become almost disgusting. Hence, this study examines the committee system and university effectiveness in Nigeria.

B. Statement of the Problem

Okai (2008) states that contemporary society generally relies on university for their development and sustainability. The academic staff expressed fear that much of their time for teaching, research and leisure is taken up with committee work. More so, there is a feeling that the committee system would increase the work load of the
academic staff but there is also a growing confusion as to the actual functions of roles of the committee and that of the administration. It is not surprising that because of the enormous load of work of the members of the committee, decision, on critical issues are not implemented within a reasonable period of time.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the committee system and university effectiveness in Nigeria with a view to determining the contributions of the committee towards the goal attainment of the university. The study also determined the problem of the committee in terms of decision making in the university organization.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

(1) **What are the contributions of the committee in the goal attainment of the university system?**

(2) **What are the problems encountered by the committee in decision making?**

**Hypothesis**

(3) **There is no significant difference between the lecturers of public and private universities of Nigeria in their perception of the contributions of the committee in the goal attainment of the university.**

(4) **There is no significant difference between the lecturers of public and private universities in their perception of the problem, encountered by the committee in decision making.**

**Delimitation of the Study**

The study was delimited to some selected public and private universities in south-south zone of Nigeria, namely: University of Port Harcourt, federal University of Technology, Owerri, and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. The private universities are Madonna and university Okah, Igbenidium University, Okada - Benin, Benson Idahosa university. The thrust of the study was on the committee system a tool for university effectiveness in Nigeria.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theory that propels the searchlight by this study on committee system and university effectiveness is the role theory by **Getzels, Lipham and Campbell (1968).** Role theory postulates that organizations are social systems made up of people who occupy various positions in organizations; each position is represented by the duties of and obligations of the individual in that position, and the way people behave in those positions depends, in part, on how they think they are expected to behave (Ukeje, Okorie and Nwagbara, 1992).

C. **Methodology**

**Research design:** The study used a descriptive design. The design sought opinion of the lecturers from the selected universities, through questioning, collection and analysis of data so derived.

**Population:** The population of this study was drawn from 6 universities made up of 3 public and 3 private universities in Nigeria drawn from south-south, south-east, and south-west geo-political zones. The elements of the population are the lecturers drawn from those universities.

From the foregoing therefore, the population of study was 1900 lecturers drawn from both public and private universities (100 from each category of school).

**Sample and sampling techniques:** **Nwana (1981) recommended that if the universe is a few thousand and minimum of 20% will do for a sample population of the study.** For a study of this nature, the researcher feels that 40% would easily be handled. This is to make the study more inclusive in order to broaden the data base from which to draw a meaningful generalization. Therefore, the sample size was 360
persons making 40% of the total population. To this end, 40 persons will be drawn from public universities, while 40 persons will be draw from the private universities.

**Instrumentation:** The instrument that was used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Committee System and University Effectiveness Questionnaire (CSUEQ). The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Part A elicit information on personal data, Part B elicit information on the contribution of the committee to the university goal attainment, while Part C elicit information on the problems facing the committee. The questionnaire is structured on 4 point response pattern.

**Method of Data Analysis**
To collate the data, the response to the questionnaire were weighted on 4 point likert scaling pattern. The weighted means were used to derive the answer to the research question. The means were further subjected to z-test in order to test the hypothesis of the study at 0.05 level of significance. The questionnaire was weighted thus:

**D. Results**

**Research question 1:** What is the contribution of the committee in the goal attainment of the university

![Weighted Likert Scale](image)

**Table 1.1:** Mean (X) and rank order statistics score on the contribution of the committee in the goal attainment of the university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Public University $X_1$</th>
<th>Private University $X_2$</th>
<th>$X_1 - X_2$</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Staff are promoted as when due.</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Funds are released for research and development programmes.</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Staff are given accommodation on request.</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Airing staff are disciplined accordingly.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Examination timetable is provided and well supervised.</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Funds released for school projects are monitored.</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The curriculum is well designed to meet the university</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mean set = 3.17

Table 1.1 used a list of eight (8) items to examine the contributions of the committees in the goal attainment of the university. The data in the table showed that items 1-8 in the rank order met the 2.50 criterion mean. These items showed the areas where the committees have successfully contributed to the goal attainment of the university. In order of magnitude, the table reveals high mean score of 4.22 and 3.02 for public and private universities with a mean set of 3.17, this suggest acceptance in both category of universities.

Therefore, considering the magnitude of the high scores in the table, it is reasonable to conclude that the committee system of the university has significantly contributed to the university goal attainment.

Research question 2: What are the problems encountered by the committee in decision making?

Table 1.1: Mean (X) and rank order statistics score on the contribution on the problems encountered by the committee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Public University $X_1$</th>
<th>Private University $X_2$</th>
<th>$X_1-X_2$</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The committee system takes a lot of time and energy.</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Academic staff fear that much of their time for research and leisure is taken up by the committee.</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The committee increases the workload of the administrator.</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>There is a doubt about the efficiency of the committee.</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>The frequency of meeting leaves the administrator no time to implement the decision of one meeting.</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Quick decisions</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mean set = 2.78

Table 1.2 examined the problems encountered by the committee in decision making. The table reveals a high mean score in 5 indicators for both public and private university. Both type of schools recorded a high mean score of 3.62 and 2.56 for public and private universities respectively, this suggests that academic staff fear that much of their time for leisure and research is taken up by the committee. The items 1-7 meet the criterion mean of 2.50. These items showed the main problems encountered by the committee. The mean set as revealed by the table was 2.78, this suggests that the problems are obvious.

From the analysis of data on table 1.2, the answer to research question 2 is that some obvious problems militated against the committee's ability to make decisions.

Test of Hypotheses

The hypotheses formulated for this study were statistically tested at 0.05 level of significant.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the lecturers of public and private universities of Nigeria in their perception of the contributions of the committee in the goal attainment of the university.

Table 1.3: Z-test of the difference between public and private university in the perception of committee's contribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of university</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Std. dev.</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Z-cal</th>
<th>Z-tab</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>49.52</td>
<td>9.41</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>458.4</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>62.31</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P > 0.05

Table 1.3 shows a mean rating of 42.71 for public universities and 51.40 for private universities, the degree of freedom was 358, the standard deviation 4.92 and 3.63 respectively for public and private universities. The Z-calculated value was 87.8 and the Z-table value was 1.96. Since the Z-critical value of 1.96 was less than the Z-calculated value of 87.8, the null hypotheses was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This suggests that there was a significant difference between the two category of university.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the lecturers of public and private universities of Nigeria in their perception of the problems encountered by the committee in decision making.
Table 1.4: Z-test of the difference between the public and private university in the perception of the problems encountered by the committee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of university</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P > 0.05*

From table 1.4 public universities had a mean score of 49.52 while private universities had a mean score of 62.31. The standard deviation for public universities was 9.41 while that of the private universities was 5.31. With degree of freedom of 3.58, the Z-calculated value was 458.4 and the critical or table value was 1.96, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted, this therefore suggests that there was a significant difference between the two categories of schools.

Summary of findings

Based on the data analysis of the study, the following findings were made:

(5) The university system has become highly routinized in the frequency of meetings of committee members and such frequency of meeting does not provide time for the administrator to implement the decisions of the meeting before the next meeting is due.

(6) A secretary of particular committee is made to serve as secretaries of many boards and committees, this makes him/her ineffective in the discharge of his or her duties.

(7) The committee system of the university is an instrument that is used to facilitate the administration of the university.

(8) The workload of the committee has in no small measure delayed the implementation of the decision taken by the committee.

(9) There is a significant difference between the lecturers of public and private universities of Nigeria in their perception of the contributions of the committee in the goal attainment of the university.

(10) There is a significant difference between the lecturers of public and private universities of Nigeria in their perception of the problems encountered by the committee in decision making.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

(11) A member of a particular committee should not be appointed to serve in another committee. This is to reduce the workload of committee members.

(12) The members of the committee should be appointed on merit and not on the bases of politics.

(13) The committee should ensure that decisions on critical issues are implemented as soon as possible, this is to ensure the effectiveness of the committee.

(14) The size of the committee, that is, the number of people in the committee should be doctrined by the nature of the problems or issues to be handled by the committee.

E. Conclusion

The university is established to pursue some specific or stated objectives. The administration of the university system is by the committee system. The growing complexity of the committee system of the university is a great concern to stakeholders of education and members of the university community. It is reasonable to conclude...
that one of the primary functions of the university is teaching, research and community service. These identified functions of the university can be realized through the committee system. It is expedient to describe the committee system as an administrative technique that is used to facilitate management activities in the college and university system. Finally, a good committee is made up of limited number of participants, this is to ensure the effective service delivery of the committee.

References


