



IJMRD 2015; 2(3): 726-729
www.allsubjectjournal.com
Received: 08-03-2015
Accepted: 25-03-2015
e-ISSN: 2349-4182
p-ISSN: 2349-5979
Impact Factor: 3.762

Prof. Bright Chima Megbo
Director of Academic
Planning, Federal University
Wukari, Nigeria

Wakili Mohammed Usman
Academic Planning Unit,
Federal University Wukari,
Nigeria

Godwin Nwobueze Awuse
Academic Planning Unit,
Federal University Wukari,
Nigeria

Evaluation of critical policy initiative for effective university management

**Bright Chima Megbo, Wakili Mohammed Usman,
Godwin Nwobueze Awuse**

Abstract

Globally, Universities are seen as citadel of knowledge in general. This phenomenon led to formulation and implementation of several policies to ensure improvement and effective University management. This paper examines critical policy initiative for effective University management in Nigeria with a specific focus on external and internal managerial structures designed for policy formulation and implementation in Universities. The paper discovers that, in spite of efforts by policy makers to improve learning in the Universities, poor policy implementation and inadequate funding have remained the greatest challenge of University management in Nigeria. The study relies on system theory as its theoretical bases for conclusion. It therefore recommends autonomy of the University system and a proactive engagement of policy makers for effective policy implementation.

Keywords: Evaluation; Policy Initiative; University Management; Policy formulation; implementation.

1. Introduction

Generally, Universities are regarded as citadel of learning. They play pivotal role for national development. Thus, education at the University level appears also accepted as a major device for advancing socio-economic, political and cultural development of any nation. Indeed, the eminent role played by the University in terms of advancing knowledge appears to have prominently given education a multi-faceted function in every society. According to Taiwo (1995), education is not only a social service, but an instrument of political socialization that informs the learner as to his privileges and basic human rights.

Evidently, in achieving this responsibility, the need for prudent formulation and implementation of policies in the University system is vital. Policies are not only essential for effective institutional management, but also for ensuring sustainability of all the systems and institutional transformation (Akilagpa, 1992). It is in realization of the aforementioned role that the Nigerian government drafted the National policy on Education. This is to ensure that there are enabling rules or policies that would facilitate the realization of objectives of higher education at the University level. According to the National Policy on Education (2004:3), higher education is expected to contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training; develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and society; develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environments; acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society; promote and encourage scholarship and community service; forge and cement national unity; and promote national and international understanding and interaction.

In fact, these objectives cannot be achieved if policies are not effectively implemented. More so, the success of all universities is largely dependent on the extent polices concerning University development are strictly implemented. As part of the functions of management, the ultimate aim of policies and strategies is to guide the activities and operation of universities with respect to the transformation of environments which are observed, foreseeable or liable to result from its own innovations. These bearings or objectives apply to its activities, structures, methods and operational regulations, as well as its resources, relations and public image. They concern all universities when they are defined and acted on by central bodies or each of the decentralized units of the universities i.e. faculties, departments, institutes or research centres, and services whenever they possess some developmental autonomy etc(cited in Tabatoni, Davies and Barblan, 2012:23).

However, experiences have shown that policy implementation in Universities in Nigeria

Correspondence:
Prof. Bright Chima Megbo
Director of Academic
Planning, Federal University
Wukari, Nigeria

seems not to have improved Nigerian Universities to assume its rightful position and contribute meaningfully to national development. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to evaluate policy initiatives for effective University management in Nigeria. The study is divided into four parts; the first part is the introduction, the second is the conceptual explanation, followed by policy initiative and University management in Nigeria: a prognostication and the last is conclusion.

Policy: A Conceptual Explanation

It appears that researchers express more consensus opinion than discrepancies on the meaning and objective of the term policy. Researchers (Tabatoni, Davies and Barblan, 2012; Dye, 1981; Adeniran, 1978) have seen policy from the point of what leaders, elites or policy makers do or failed to do. Specifically, Tabatoni, Davies and Barblan, (2012:23), have posited that policy is formulated in terms of general principles regarding what to do or not to do and how. It comprises of rules and common standards which condition the long-term development of an institution. Earlier, Dye (1981:5) argues that "public policy reflects elite values, serves elites ends, and is a product of elites". Interestingly, the question that has not been answered is what actually constitutes elite values.

In his view, Adeniran (1978) contends that policies are goal-oriented. Officially enunciated policies produce result. When non-policy based decision-making becomes unsuccessful or successful, it frequently results in a revision of official policy. It is therefore important to note that policies are essential not only for effectiveness in an organization but to ensure the realization of the organizational goals.

Management of University simply refers to means by which University is operated, organized and managed. Bleikie (2007) opines that management of University deals with how University steer itself, the processes used to manage it in such a way that leads to effective performance in achieving needed mission, vision, goals and satisfaction of Stakeholders. Becher and Kogan (1992) posit that management of University is concerned with the establishment of values inside University, system of decision-making and resource allocation, the mission and purpose, the patterns of authority and hierarchies and the relationship of University as institution to the different academic World. The management of Universities in Nigeria is legally enshrined in the Acts and Statutes; and the government is expected to provide the enabling policy and legal framework for it to function (Okebukola, 2006). The management of University revolves around the Vice-Chancellor who doubles as an academic and administrative head of the University. The Vice-Chancellor is supported by deputies and a number of Senior Academic Staff such as Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments, (Erero, 1996). Also in the management crew is the Registrar, the Bursar, the Librarian and a set of other Administrative Staff, who assist the Vice-Chancellor in the day to day affairs of the University. The decision-making on academic and administrative activities of the University are carried out through Committees or Senate Council. Due to the complexity of University, the decisions and choices the management makes become complex too in the area of Students in-take, Staff recruitment, the relationship of the University and the Society at large; all of these place a

premium of good policies on the Universities in general (Adamolekun, 2007).

Policies are not only essential for effective University management, but also for ensuring sustainability of all the Systems and University transformation (Akilagpa, 1992). Policy in the management of University in Nigeria is contained in the National policy on Education. Every policy is tailored towards ensuring that the vision and mission of Universities are achieved. All policies in the Nigerian Universities play some vital roles in the management of Units, Departments and Faculties within the University community in order to improve in teaching and learning. They also define effective and transparent criteria and processes for the sustenance and evaluation of activities within the University set-up.

Theoretical Discourses

The study adopts system theory in its analysis. The analytical utility of the theory is dependent on its ability to explain the workings of organization using input and output matrix. The system approach explains that system is seen as the assemblage of various parts to interact with itself and the external environment, as a whole with the aim of achieving a specific goal (see Easton 1965). It explains input device as a means by which demands are met within the system while after the transformation of the demand into decisions and policies, it comes out through the output device.

From the above analogy, one can say that the system is important as it is able to explain to us the interactions in the University community and processes of policy formulation in the University system. The school is seen as a community within the larger community in every society. As a result, there is tendency that the immediate environment may contribute in shaping the type of policy emanating from the institution. Our point is that in line with system theory, there are lots of determinants both internally and externally that influence policies in the University system.

Policy Initiative and the Challenge of Effective Management of Universities in Nigeria

The control of Universities and policies therein could emanate from two major controlling aspects. For instance, the National University Commission (NUC) can shape policy of a University because it has some sort of control on every University in Nigeria. In describing their role, Okojie (2007) posits that the NUC activities in improving quality of university education the country include:

- accreditation of courses
- approval of courses and programmes
- maintenance of minimum academic standards
- monitoring of universities
- giving guidelines for setting up of universities
- monitoring of private universities
- Prevention of the establishment of illegal campus (cited in Okojie, 2007:18).

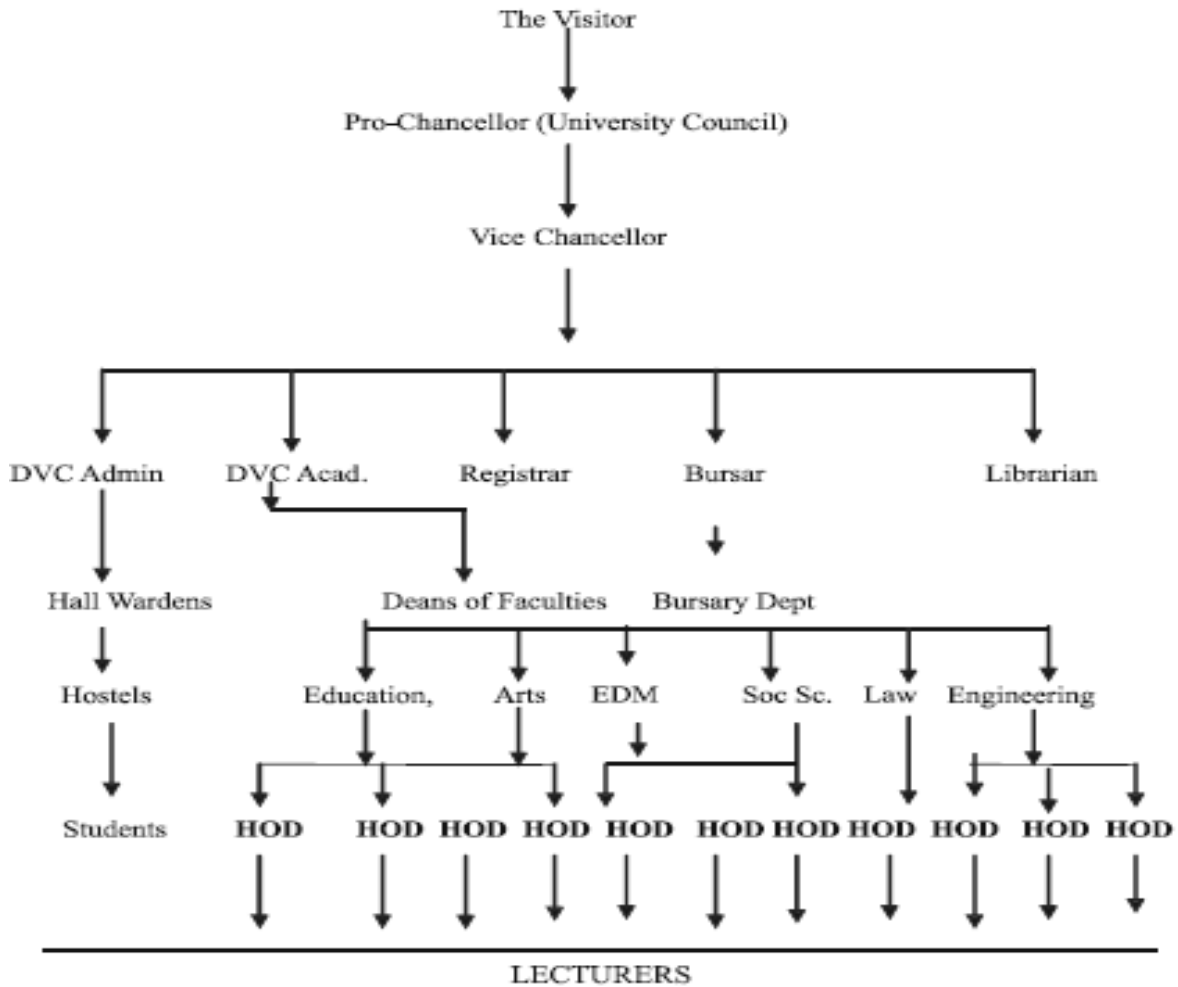
Through the above functions, the NUC shapes the policy of the University, because the University would always try to meet its template or set standard. In doing this, they may forgo some important aspects of the needs.

Secondly and perhaps more importantly is the extent the University regulates itself or determines its policy for effective University management. This seems to be a major challenge to policy initiatives in University. The fact that University management is streamlined may not provide

avenue for openness and accountability. Also, top-down policy may be effective but seems not inclusive leading to sabotage sometimes. The Universities in Nigeria are organized in such form.

The diagram below shows the organogram of Universities in Nigeria:

Table 1: The Organogram of Universities in Nigeria



Source: Owojori and Asaolu (2010:10)

As can be seen, the first is the Visitor who is usually the Head of State or the Head of Government that established it (The President in case of Federal Universities, and the Governors in case of State Universities) followed by other decision makers down the line. The import of this is that mostly policies flows from the top and this as well, may hinder effort at discovering mismanagement. This could be worst, taken into cognizance poor funding of the Universities in Nigeria. For instance, Adegbite (2007), argues that the major challenge facing the management of University system in Nigeria is inadequate funding. Adding to this position is the fact that the Nigerian government over the years has not been meeting the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommendations of 26% of the total budget allocation to education sector. These challenges seem to have crippled policies and hindered effective application of these policies for valuable management.

Conclusion

From the above analysis, it is apparently clear that educational policies have great influence on the smooth operation of Universities in the country. The paper also explains policy and its relevance in University management

in Nigeria. However, analysis has shown that there is urgent need to reposition University system in Nigeria for effective management. This could range from making its decision making process to be more inclusive to ensure that policies are not sabotaged. It is based on this observation that the paper recommends a bottom-top approach of policy formulation. Similarly, proper University management are essentially important as without this, all formulated policies bowls down to nothing. This therefore indicates that prudent University management assists in the attainment of societal goals. Finally, there is an urgent need for the government to increase the funding of the Universities to enable them perform their statutory responsibilities.

References

1. Adegbite, J. G. O. (2007), The Education Reform Agenda: Challenges for Tertiary Education Administration in Nigeria; Being a paper presented at the Sixth Annual Seminar of the Conference of registrars of Colleges of education in Nigeria. (South-West Zone) at the College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti, June 12th.

2. Adeniran, T. (1978), Public Policy Making in Federal System: A Framework for Analysis, *Quarterly Journal of Administration*, 7 (2): 16-25.
3. Akilagpa, S. (1992), Relations Between Government and University in Ghana: A Case Study, in G. Neave and F. VanVught, F. (Eds.) *Government and Higher Education Relations Across three Continents: The winds of change*. Oxford: Pergamon.
4. Dye, R.T. (1981), *Understanding Public Policy*. New Jersey: Prince-Hall.
5. Easton, D. (1965), *System Analysis of Political Life*. New York: Wiley and Sons.
6. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004), *National Policy on Education*. Lagos: NERDC
7. Okojie, J. A. (2007), *Higher Education in Nigeria*, Being a paper presented at Education in Africa Day, held at House of Commons Parlance of West Ministers, London. Retrieved from <http://www.nucnigeriainfo/eshouseofcommons.ppt>.
8. Owojori, A. and Asaolu, T. (2010), Critical Evaluation of Personnel Management Problems in the Nigerian School System. *International Journal for Educational Science*, 2(1): 1-11
9. Tabatoni, P. Davies, J. and Barblan A. (2012), *Strategic Management and Universities, Institutional Management*. Paris: Thema Press
10. Taiwo, C. O. (1995), *The Administration of a Nigerian University*, Lagos: Oxford University Press.