
Impact of Politicization of Leadership Position in the General Administration of University Education in Enugu State

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Abstract

The study investigates impact of politicization of leader position in the general administration of University education in Enugu State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Literature was extensively reviewed. The study adopted descriptive survey research design, while the area of study was Enugu State. The population for the study was 8660 respondents comprised of 5890 male academic staff and 2770 female academic staff. The researcher used proportionate stratified random sampling technique to sample 1723 respondents representing 20% of the total population for the study. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. Mean statistics and standard deviation were used to analyze the research question while T-test was used to the hypotheses. Result of data analysis revealed that politicization of leadership position brings about monetary benefit, fairness of the position, and settlement of political supporters among others, while the consequences are threat to democratic development in the school, misappropriation of public fund gratification among others. It was recommended among others that autonomy should be granted to university institution by the government.

Keywords: Politicization, Leadership, Administration

Background of the Study

University education in Nigeria is a complex organization of interactions among independent bodies, groups and individuals, with the aim of achieving the National educational goals. These bodies, groups and individuals who are seen as stakeholders are the government, to general public, parents, teachers, teachers' union, religious bodies and voluntary organizations. Nigerian universities are therefore seen as dynamic organic whole, having a set of dream, to fulfill. Ani (2007) noted that this dream is seen through the objectives, mission, visions and inputs in a form of human and materials resources. He believed that, the vision or dream was mainly to nurture men and women of character and good judgment, who will lay the foundation of good leadership for Nigeria as a country and set her upon the path of greatness through university education that will sustain development and salutary values of the society.

Obi (2003) observed that the fundamental dream of universities is to promote the life of the mind through intellectual inquiry as well as generate quality leadership and store and transmit specialized knowledge and sophisticated expertise, higher forms of culture and ethical basis of conduct. In agreement with Obi, Ivowi (2006) equally believe that universities exist to generate disseminate and apply knowledge through teaching, research and extension services.

Fafunwa (1995) cited in Eze (2020) maintains that Nigerian Education must of necessity relate to the needs and aspirations of the child, the community and the nation and indeed be tailored towards the re-inventing and the re-discovering of our cultural heritage if quality leaders are in position of authority. In essence, we need to restore our cultural values, ethics, quality and high education standard. This could be achieved through the proper implementation of policies guiding the appointment of chief executive in tertiary institutions.

According to Odo (2014) chief executive of an institution is the highest ranking executive in the organization whose main responsibilities include developing and implementing high level strategies, making major corporate decisions, managing the overall operations and resources of a company, and acting as the main point of communication between the board and directors and the corporate operations. He outlined the following working policy that guide leadership selection or appointment in an organization

- a. Ability to create and conceptualize opportunity within the organization.
- b. Analyses and interpret organizational events
- c. Lead the followers effectively and have good decision ability.
- d. Enhance cordial interaction and presentation of facts
- e. Adapting and coping strategies
- f. Enterprising and performing in the organization
- g. Ability to organizing and executing organizational functions
- h. Display multiple talent profile
- i. Improved moral character and retention ability.
- j. Professional qualification

Politicization is one of the derivatives of politics. Ebegbulem (2013) viewed politics as the art of influencing, manipulating, or confronting groups so as to advance the purpose of some against the opposition of others. From the views of the above scholar, it can be deduced that politics exists in every group or organization whether formal or informal and within a political party that controls the government. Edet(2017) observed that politicization of administration of Universities in this context is limited to some administrative practices carried out in the day to day running of the school. Eko (2014) opined that Nigeria education sector has witnessed unstable programme implementation. He noted that, the dilapidated facilities for effective teaching and learning, poor staffing, monetization of admission processes, incessant strike action, are among the observable problems in Nigeria tertiary institution.

In tertiary institutions in Nigeria and Enugu State in particular cases abound of politicization of leadership position by political gladiators. Chief executive of an institution is a civil servant and ethics of the civil service rule stipulate clearly that they should not be involved in party affairs. The evidence of politicization comes in form of

patronage supplanting the traditional mechanisms of recruitment and promotion in the civil service, blurring of tasks that should be undertaken by the civil service, and an unwillingness to listen to the advice and counter arguments of the civil service among others.

In the process of executing the fundamental task of university education, the principal challenges that has made the attainment of this dream almost impossible as observed by scholars like Babalola (2005) cited in Aguba (2009) is the problem of politicization of leadership position of tertiary institutions and corruption among the major stakeholders of education. The problems are about individual group quest for ethnic and religious hegemony in a multicultural diver's country like Nigeria. The quest of multiculturalism is to build a society where within the philosophy of meritocracy, individuals are given what they deserve. what is obtainable in Nigeria is not democracy in the real sense, but a quasi-practice of democracy (Agwu 2018) One question that agitate the minds of the general public with the manner in which Nigerian universities are governed is that; what is fundamentally wrong with the ways by which university leadership positions are politicized by influential politicians thereby repositioning weak managerial leaders based on political ideology and favoritism. In the like of the above background this paper seeks to find out the impact of politicization of leadership positions of universities on general administration of the institution in Enugu State.

Statement of Problem

The rate at which political gladiators interfere in the administration and management of university education in Nigeria and Enugu State in particular poses a serious threat in the effective administration of the school. Cases of politicization of leadership position of university education abounds manifesting itself in form of office patronage to party members, supplanting the traditional mechanisms of recruitment and promotion, blurring of tasks that should be undertaken by the civil servant and unwillingness to listen to advise. The continual politicization of leadership position of university education will result to poor school administration, high rate of indiscipline, among students and staff, financial embezzlement, and other social vices. These problems prompt the researcher to embark on this research work.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to find out the impact of politicization of leadership position in the general administration of the university education in Enugu state. Specifically, the study will

1. Find out the impact of politicization of leadership position in the level of discipline maintained within the school.
2. Find out the impact of politicization of leadership position in the type of climate generated within the institution.

Research Question

The following research questions, guided the study.

1. What are the impacts of politicization of leadership positions in the level of discipline maintenance within the institution?

2. What is the impact of politicization of leadership position in the type of climate generated within the institution?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study and were tested at .05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female academic staff of the university on the impact of politicization of leadership position of university in the level of discipline maintained within the institution.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female academic staff of the university on the impact of politicization of leadership positions of university in the type of climate generated within the school.

Methods

The research design used was descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey design is type in which a representative sample opinion is chosen to be a true representative sample opinion of the entire population (Nworgu 2015). Descriptive research design is best in this research, as questionnaire was used together relevant information needed for the work.

The area of study is Enugu State. Enugu State host lots of tertiary institution ranging from universities, colleges of Education and monotechnique of which some are private, federal and state owned institutions.

Population for the study include all the academic staff of public university in Enugu State given a total number of 8660 respondents comprising of 5890 male academic staff and 2770 female academic staff.

The total sample for the study was 1732 respondents representing 20% of the total population for the study. The researcher used proportionate stratified random sampling technique to sample 20% present of the total population comprising of 554 female academic staff and 1178 male academic staff.

The instrument for data collection is a structural questionnaire developed by the researcher.

To ensure the validity of the instrument, items were subjected to scrutiny by educational experts and necessary amendments were effected.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question 1: What is the impact of politicization of leadership position of university in Enugu State in the level of discipline maintained within the institution?

Table 1: showing the mean response of male and female academic staff on the impact of politicization of leadership position on discipline.

Male Academic Staff Female Academic Staff

S/N	Items	No	X	SD	D	No	X	SD	D
1	Monetary benefits attached to the position	1178	2.66	1.06	A	554	2.74	1.63	A
2.	Firmness of the position		2.52	1.14	A		2.66		
3.	To control school financial activities		2.48	1.10	D		2.62	1.13	A
4.	Settlement of political supporters		2.74	1.22	A		2.54	1.14	A
5.	Influence admission process by the ruling party		2.63	1.14	A		2.63	1.15	A
6	To easily influence the school educational policy		2.71	1.62	A		2.59	0.29	D
7.	To gain students political support		2.49	0.69	D		2.58		A
8.	To review sensitive educational programmes for the children of the influential party member		2.55	1.14	A		2.66		A
9	To ensure unity among party royalist		2.50	0.16	D		2.74	1.22	D
10	To give sense of belonging among party members		2.57	1.01	D		2.62	0.10	D
	Grand mean		2.58	1.44			2.64	1.26	

The result of data analysis revealed that both respondents agreed on the items as some of the major factors responsible for the politicization of leadership of universities in Enugu State as they grand mean were 2.58 and 2.64 respectively.

Research Question 2: What are the consequences of politicization of leadership of university institution in Enugu State?

Table 2: Showing the mean response of male and female academic staff of universities on the consequences of politicization of leadership position in university

Male Academic Staff Female Academic Staff

S/N	Items	No	X	SD	D	No	X	SD	D
11	It dissipate the important asset	1178	2.56			554	2.51		
12	It destroy greatest potential assets of the school like enthusiasm		2.66	1.74	A		2.75	1.43	A
13	It also threaten democratic development in the school		2.72	1.82	A		2.68	1.64	A
14	Misappropriation of public funds and embezzlement		2.54	1.66	A		2.86	1.71	A
15	Looted funds are kept secretly abroad		2.69	1.68	A		2.51	1.27	A
16	Increase money landing across national borders		2.58	1.48	A		2.64	1.69	A
17	Increased gratification involving monetary, pecuniary, materials or even physical favour like sexual relationship		2.77	1.71	A		2.70	1.48	A
18	Increased rate of abuse of office including violation of oath of office by an incumbent		2.82	1.74	A		2.77	1.59	A
19	Obstructing due process for political advantage		2.44	1.64	D		2.80	1.55	A
20	Increased favoritism and other forms of primordial consideration		2.66	1.32	A		2.44	1.50	D
	Grand mean		2.64	1.04			2.66	1.10	

The result of data analysis in table two shows a grand mean score of 2.64 and 2.66 respectively male and female academic on the consequences of politicization of leadership position of university in Enugu State. The implication of the above findings is that politicization of leadership position of universities has negative consequences in the effective administration of the school.

Hypotheses

Category	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-cri	D
Male	1178	2.58	1.44	1730	-1.66	±1.96	Not rejected
Female	554	2.64	1.26				

The result of hypothesis one revealed that the value of t-calculated as -1.66 while the table value was ±1.96 at 1730 degree of freedom. Since the calculated value is less than the critical value, the null hypothesis tested was not rejected. The implication is that thing is no significant difference in the mean response of male and female academic staff of university on the consequences of politicization of leadership position universities in Enugu state.

Hypotheses 2:

Category	N	X	SD	DF	t-cal	t-cri	D
Male	1178	2.64	1.04	1730	-1.84	±1.96	Not rejected
Female	554	2.66	1.10				

Result of hypotheses 2 revealed that the value of t-calculated was 1.84 at 0.05 level of significance and 1730 degree of freedom while the critical values was±1.96. since the critical value is greater than the table value, the hypotheses, tested was not rejected, the implication is that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of the respondents on the consequences of politicization of leadership position in universities in Enugu State.

Discussion of Findings

Result of Data analysis on table one shows that the respondents agreed that on most of the factors as been responsible for the politicization of leadership position of universities. The findings is in agreement with the views of Obi (2003) who observed that the fundamental dream of universities is to promote the life of the mind through intellectual inquiry, quality leadership, and as well as generate, store and transmit specialized knowledge and sophisticated expertise, higher forms of culture and ethical basis of conduct. Supporting the findings also Fafunwa (1995) cited in Aguba (2009) maintains that Nigerian Education system must of necessity relate to the needs and aspiration of the child, community and the nation and indeed be tailored toward the re-inventing and re-discovery of our of our cultural heritage if quality leaders are imposition of authority.

Table two equally revealed that there are negative consequences of politicization of leadership position of university in Enugu State. The findings is in agreement with the views of Babalola (2005) as he observed that the basic problem of politicization of leadership position of tertiary institution centers on destroying greatest potential assets

of the like enthusiasm. It equally threaten democracy in the school and encourages misappropriate of public funds and embezzlement.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was discovered that certain factors are responsible for politicization of leadership position in universities in Enugu State. Some of the factors include monetary benefit, firmness of the position and settlement of political members among others. Equally, politicization of leadership position has negative effect in the administration of the school. Some of the consequences include threatening democratic development of the school among others.

Recommendation

The following recommendations were made

First government and its agencies should not politicized leadership position of universities in Nigeria for its adverse effect lies heavily on the students, secondly, adequate autonomy should be granted to universities institution in totality to avoid further politics in institutional leadership positions.

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