

**The Supervisory Role of the National Universities Commission
and the Management of Universities
in the South-South Zone of Nigeria**

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Issues such as financial autonomy, academic autonomy and administrative autonomy are crucial to the effective management of university education globally. For many years Nigerian universities have complained of being impeded in these areas because of the supervisory role of the National Universities Commission (NUC) which tend to encroach on their autonomy. In order to confirm this complaint and proffer solution 280 university administrators and 100 university union officials from the 10 universities in the South-South Geopolitical zone of Nigeria were surveyed. An instrument known as the 'National Universities Commission Supervisory Role and Effect questionnaire' was used for data collection. The chi-square statistical method was used for data analysis. The study revealed that the supervisory role of the NUC in the areas of funding, ensuring minimum academic standards, and political interference in the appointments of vice-chancellors and Governing Councils has been abused resulting in the poor management of Nigerian Universities. The paper subsequently recommended that these anomalies be eliminated through an amendment of the statute that established the NUC in order to give the universities the necessary autonomy for growth.

Introduction

In 1959, the Nigerian Government set up a high powered commission under the chairmanship of Sir, Eric Ashby to conduct an enquiry into the country's manpower needs. The commission pointed out that there is an extent to which development could be rushed, as:

Modern dams, power stations, textile factories or still mills can be constructed within a few years. But it takes between ten and fifteen years to develop the managers, the administrators and the engineers to operate them. Schools and College buildings can be erected in a matter of months, teachers and professorstake long time to produce (FGN, 1960).

The Ashby commission recommended the establishment of regional universities, so as to meet up the post-independence manpower needs of the country. By 1962 there were already five universities in Nigeria namely the Universities of Ife, Lagos, Ibadan, Nsukka and Ahmedu Bello University, Zaria. These Universities were established on the basis of the Ashby commission recommendations. Also established on the basis of the Ashby Commission recommendation is the National Universities Commission (NUC) which came into existence in 1962. The NUC is one of the agencies of the Federal Ministry of Education with the mandate to maintain minimum academic standards in Nigerian Universities as well as carry out accreditation functions. Other similar agencies include the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) which play supervisory roles to polytechnics and colleges of education respectively. The NUC has come a long way since 1962 with five Universities to 2006 with 75 Universities to supervise. It is believed that the NUC no longer has the capacity and capability to adequately supervise Nigerian Universities as reflected in the observation of Ejiogu (2003, P.9) thus:

Without doubt, having the NUC as the sole monitoring and accreditation body for all Universities and their numerous programmes, is inelegant and dysfunctional. Would it not be better if, for example the Nigeria Academy of Education, the Nigeria Academy of Science, the Social Science Research Council and National Academy of Arts are empowered to accredit programmes in Education, Science, Social Sciences and Humanities respectively?

Fabunmi and Akinwumiju (2003) also believe that the excessive regulation of Nigerian Universities by the NUC especially through funds allocations has reduced the freedom of the Universities and, therefore, their abilities to maintain high standards. The interest of this paper is to find out the relationship between the NUC in its supervisory functions and the Universities in Nigeria.

Theoretical Support

Etzioni's Compliance Theory is used as the support base for this work. This theory applies to only normative, utilitarian and coercive organizations. Etzioni (1961) opines that the 'goodness of fit' of a given

compliance or power strategy depends upon three major variables, namely: goals, involvement and task. According to him, the appropriateness of a given compliance strategy depends largely on organizational costs in relation to goal achievement. For example, if the goal is order and the task a routine, the most efficient strategy is coercive. However, in choosing this strategy it is at the price of alienating subordinates. Etzioni believes that organizations that exhibit similar compliance structures exhibit similar goals. He classifies goals as (1) order goals, which are oriented toward control of actors in an organization considered deviant, (2) economic goals which refer to the provisions of increased production and services to outsiders at favourable cost to the organization, and (3) cultural goals refer to the socializing, institutionalizing, preserving, extending, and applying value and life systems. The university is considered as an organization with a culture goal. Sergiovanni and Starratt (1979) point out that the tasks of teachers and students' are largely expressive in that they define, legitimize, and strengthen commitment to the cultural goals of the school. According to this reasoning, expressive tasks and cultural goals require normative compliance strategies and obtain moral commitment from school members.

Etzioni's Compliance Theory has some implications for the supervisory role of the National Universities Commission (NUC) with regard to Nigerian Universities. The type of power exhibited in carrying out this supervisory role influences the goals in terms of quantity and quality achieved by the universities. This is so because the internal operations of Universities in Nigeria are substantially guided by the dispositions of the NUC.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are proposed in order to properly guide the investigation:

1. There is no significant relationship between the funding role of the NUC and the effective management of Nigerian Universities.
2. There is no significant relationship between minimum standards requirement of the NUC and the effective management of Nigerian Universities.
3. There is no significant relationship between the interference on academic freedom by the NUC and the effective management of Nigerian Universities.
4. No significant relationship exists between the political influence of the NUC in the appointment of Governing Councils and the effective management of Nigerian Universities.

5. There is no significant relationship between the interference on University autonomy by the NUC and the effective management of Nigerian Universities.

Related Literature

The establishment of the National Universities Commission (UNC) in 1962 is a product of the Ashby Commission recommendations of 1960. The NUC is a co-ordinating body for University education in Nigeria and charged by law, with the responsibility of assuring quality in the Universities. It is also the only body recognized by law to provide accreditation for all academic programmes offered in all Nigerian Universities. Awopute (2000, p.15) lists the powers of the NUC as provided by Decree No. 1 of 1974 as amended by Decree No. 49 of 1988 thus: To,

- a. Advise the President and Governors of the States, through the Minister of Education, on the creation of new universities and other degree awarding institutions in Nigeria;
- b. Prepare, after consultation with all state Governments, the Universities, the National Manpower Board and such other bodies as may be appropriate, periodic master plans for the balanced development of all Universities in Nigeria;
- c. Make such other investigations relating to higher education as the commission may consider to be in the national interest;
- d. Inquire into and advise the Federal Government on the financial needs, both recurrent and capital of University education in Nigeria and in particular, to investigate and study the financial needs of university research and to ensure that adequate provision is made for this in the Universities;
- e. Increase block grants from the Federal Government and allocate them to Federal Universities in accordance with such formula as may be laid down by the National Council of Ministers
- f. Collate, analyze and publish information relating to University education in Nigeria;
- g. Undertake periodic reviews of the terms and conditions of service of personnel engaged in the Universities; and
- h. Recommend to the Visitor of the Federal Universities that a visitation be made to such University as at when it considers it necessary.

Oluchukwu (2005) has highlighted other regulatory functions of the NUC to include:

- Creation of new faculties, departments, programmes and increase in student population must receive prior approval of NUC, acting on behalf of the Federal Government;
- Proposed Universities must not have more than five faculties at commencement and for the first three years there after;
- Staff student ratio must at all times conform to NUC guidelines;
- Academic staff mix must conform to the prescribed guidelines of UNC; and
- Draft statute of each University must receive approval of NUC.

Awopute (2000) and Nwadiani (2005) believe that in the course of performing its functions the NUC has deviated from its primary role of central co-ordination, advising, planning and development of the Universities. Instead, it has become an authoritarian institution with increasing arbitrary centralized control of the Universities. According to Awopute (2000) the law that established the NUC conferred on it enormous powers which allows the Executive Secretary of the Organization to influence the positions of Vice-chancellors, Pro-Chancellor, Chancellor and Council members through coercion by refusal to release funds to the Universities as and when due. In this way the NUC is able to manipulate the leadership of the Universities to show loyalty to the Government in power.

Fabunmi (2005), Ejiogu (2003) and Awopute (2000) believe that the enormous powers and responsibilities associated with the NUC rather than enhance the quality of education in Nigeria actually impedes it. In their view, it is not only that the body is too powerful but lacks the capacity to cope with the responsibility of singularly co-ordinating the activities of all Nigerian universities.

Many of the problems associated with the NUC and Nigerian Universities have been anchored on the Executive Secretary of the NUC who is its Principal Officer. Awopute (2000) opines that one major factor that led to the derailment of the initial conception of the NUC was and is still the disposition of the Principal Officer or the Executive Secretary of the NUC. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) (2000) agrees that the excessive powers of the Executive Secretary of the NUC has created many problems for Nigerian Universities. According to the ASUU, in 1996 the NUC Executive Secretary requested Vice-Chancellors via a letter to terminate the appointments of lecturers who took part in a

nation-wide strike legitimately called by the union in order to defend the University system. Furthermore, ASUU (2000) observes thus:

The NUC's power on matters of funding, and its control of University grants allow the NUC to delay unnecessarily the release of funds to the Universities, stifle or promote programmes as it pleases. The NUC does not prompt the most effective and rational handling of university funds (p.12)

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has also made the following observations in respect of the NUC and the management of Nigerian Universities.

- That the selection of University Councils based on political affiliation and influence is not appropriate for developing an autonomous University system.
- That the appointment of Vice-Chancellors based on political interests and Government's over-bearing influence undermines their freedom and does not advance the development of the academia nor the pursuit of knowledge.
- That inadequate funding of universities entails the loss of their autonomy with adverse implications for academic standards.
- That the proposal by the Federal Government of Nigeria to grant full autonomy to Nigerian Universities which will require them to generate their own funds through various fees and commercial activities is controversial and will have the effect of commercializing University education (ASUU, 2000).

Funding

Government grants constitute the main source of funding university education in Nigeria. The Federal Government of Nigeria disburses funds to Federal Universities through the National Universities Commission (NUC). By its position as fund disbursing agent the NUC is able to regulate and control the activities of universities. For example, no new department can be created in a university without approval from the NUC.

Furthermore, it is mandatory for vice-chancellors to account adequately to the NUC any grants and subventions disbursed to their respective universities. An inability of any vice-chancellor to comply with this requirement can and does attract appropriate sanctions (ASUU, 2000,

p.17). The funding influence of the NUC on universities is recorded by Awopetu (2000, p.19) thus:

The NUC, using its powers to allocate funds to universities, has stifled and almost strangled the universities. Apart from delayed remittance of recurrent funds to the universities, the NUC withholds, at times for years, allocations for research, capital projects and teaching and research equipment grants.

The funding role of the NUC has the following implications. Firstly, the growth of a university is under check as it has no financial autonomy to expand as it may desire. Secondly, a university is subjected to the whims and caprices of an external body (the NUC) which may be under political influence and lack a good knowledge of the problems of the university but must decide what it gets for its existence. Thirdly, the near total financial dependence of Nigerian universities on Government is an impediment to initiatives and growth of the universities (Okoroma 2001, p.108).

Minimum Academic Standards:

In 1985 the Federal Military Government of Nigeria promulgated Decree No.16 known as the National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions which provided for the vetting of courses offered and their contents by inspectors appointed by the NUC. Such inspectors were to inspect lecturers' notes and references. Lecturers who refused to co-operate with the inspectors were to be fined N500 or imprisoned for six (6) months, or both. The Departments that did not meet the minimum standards set by the NUC were to be closed down.

The accreditation of universities was removed by the Decree from professionals and the universities and made an exclusive function of the NUC which, therefore set minimum standards and forced same on the universities. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) was uncomfortable with this development. ASUU (2000, p.5) faulted the replacement of the painstaking, internal processes of assessing and improving academic standards through Departments, Faculty Boards and Senate, with the NUC minimum standards which did not provide an internal mechanism for enforcement. In support of this stance Ejiogu (2003) noted that the NUC does not have the capacity to cope with the responsibility of a sole monitoring and accreditation body. This is because Nigeria has more universities today when compared to 1985 when the

Decree was promulgated. In order to reduce the burden of setting and monitoring minimum standards on the NUC Ejiogu (2003, p.9) suggested that monitoring and accreditation of universities be carried out by the Nigerian Academy of Education, the Nigerian Academy of Science, the Social Science Research Council and the National Academy of Arts to accredit programmes in Education, Science, Social Sciences and Humanities respectively.

Academic Freedom and University Autonomy

The laws and statutes that established each university in Nigeria made provisions for academic freedom and university autonomy. Academic freedom as defined by Wokocha and Okujagu (1999,p.126) is:

The freedom of scholarly investigation regardless of its direction and the freedom to communicate the results of such scholarly investigation, no matter whether they conflict with the views of the power blocks within and outside the university - these more than any other thing constitute academic freedom.

Academic freedom in Nigerian universities has suffered a set back because the thirty one years of Military Governments turned the universities into extensions of the public service. The Military Government dished out directives to the universities, which had to be implemented without questions or reservations. As a result, the policy-making organs of various Nigerian universities served only as forms for rubber-stamping governments' directives. This situation resulted in the destruction of the traditional values of academic freedom in these universities. The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) gave credence to this fact when it stated thus:

The systematic encroachment of university autonomy and its twin essence, academic freedom, began with the imposition of military rule on the people of Nigeria. The authoritarian rule that stripped individuals and groups of their rights to self-governance and denied them freedom of association, self-expression and conscience was carried over into institutions of higher learning, with the collaboration of some individuals from within the universities themselves (ASUU 2000, p.4)

The NUC, being a creation of the then Military Government, operated in a somewhat military manner that showed little respect for academic freedom of universities. For example, the NUC requires universities to strictly comply with its guidelines and such requirement hampers academic freedom. Furthermore, the Vice-chancellors of Nigerian Universities are usually at the beck and call of the Executive Secretary of the NUC. Such subservient relationship is often a hindrance to academic freedom and university autonomy.

The appointment of Vice-chancellors of Universities in Nigeria has been very political and is the responsibility of the Government to make. Political interest groups often work through the NUC to influence the choice of the Government. Such practice does not guarantee university autonomy which is an important condition for academic freedom (Okoroma, 2001).

Governing Councils and Government Influence

By law every Nigerian University has a governing Council appointed by the President of Nigeria if a Federal University is involved or a Governor if the University is owned by a State. The Governing Councils are to ensure accountability and proper management of resources. Governing Councils also serve the purpose of insulating universities from unnecessary political pressures external to them. General internal policies are formulated for the universities by their respective Governing Councils. Over the years the appointment of University Governing Councils has been quite political. The loyalty of the appointees to the President or Governor as the case may be, has been a more weighty factor for consideration than the abilities of the appointees. Rather than an instrument to facilitate the development of the universities the members of the Councils and especially the Chairmen are seen as representing the Government in the Universities. For this reason, Governments often influence the activities of their universities through its Governing Councils. Such influence often impedes university autonomy and therefore, growth (Ojo, 1990; Okoroma, 2001).

Methodology

Nigeria comprises of six geo-political zones. This study covers only one geo-political zone, namely; the South-South.

Population

There are ten Universities in the South-South zone made up of four Federal or National Universities, four State Universities and two

private Universities. The population comprised of 10 Vice-Chancellors, 10 Deputy Vice-chancellors, 10 Registrars, 50 Deans of Faculties (each University has five Deans), 200 Heads of Departments (each University has 20 Heads of Departments), and 100 Executive and Ex-officio members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) (10 from each university). This produced a total population of 380 persons who are most suited to provide the data required for this study. In this study Vice-chancellors, Deputy-Vice-chancellors, Deans and Heads of Departments are collectively referred to as administrators while the Executive and Ex-officio members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities are referred to as union officials.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Due to the smallness of the population of the study all the 380 subjects were used as respondents. As there was no sampling a sampling technique was therefore not necessary.

Research Design

A survey research design was adopted and this involved administering copies of a questionnaire to the respondents and retrieving them after completion.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main instrument used for the study was a questionnaire known as the 'National Universities Commission Supervisory Role and Effect Questionnaire (NUCSREQ) designed by the researcher. The instrument considered the influence of the following parameters on the management of University education in Nigeria: funding as a regulatory instrument, minimum standards requirement, interference in academic freedom, Government influence on Governing Council appointments, and interference by Government through the NUC in the autonomy of Universities. The NUCSREQ was designed after the Likert modified four point type scale with response options of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (DA) = 2; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

Validation of Instrument

The instrument was subjected to a validity test. After acquainting some of my colleagues who are experts in measurement and evaluation with the purpose of the study copies of the instrument were given to them to determine the capability of the items to elicit the required data for the study. In addition, the experts were requested to review the questionnaire items for clarity, appropriateness of language and instructions to

respondents. This procedure ensured both the face and content validity of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

A reliability test was conducted to ascertain the consistency of the instrument to elicit the required data. A pilot study involving 10 respondents drawn from Universities outside of the South-South zone was conducted. The test-retest method was adopted to determine the reliability of the instrument. The correlations between the test-retest method were calculated using the formula:

$$r = \frac{N \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{N \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2} \sqrt{N \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2}}$$

where	$\sum x$	=	sum of the x scores
	$\sum y$	=	sum of the y scores
	$\sum x^2$	=	sum of the squared x scores
	$\sum y^2$	=	sum of the squared y scores
	$\sum xy$	=	sum of the products of paired x and y scores
	N	=	number of paired scores

The calculations produced a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.72$ which is acceptable for the study.

Administration of the Instrument

The researcher used post-graduate students to reach out to the respondents who are in ten Universities spread across six States. The researcher has post-graduate students from all the six States and beyond. They were therefore used as research assistants. Some copies of the instrument were sent through postal services to the respondents. The researcher administered the instrument to respondents in nearby Universities and had useful discussions with some of the respondents. The complete administration of the instrument took about two weeks.

Data Analysis Procedure

The objectives, hypotheses as well as the nature of data collected determined the statistical method used in the analysis of data. Since the study involved non-parametric data, the Likert method of summated ratings was used. Each statement in the questionnaire was assigned four options as was provided earlier under instrumentation. Copies of the completed questionnaire were decoded. The chi-square test was found

most appropriate for analyzing the data obtained. The chi-square is used to measure the discrepancy between observed and expected frequencies. The chi-square method was therefore used in testing the hypotheses of this study. The formula for chi-square is given below:

$$x^2 = \frac{\sum (fo - fe)}{fe}$$

where

fo = the observed frequencies
fe = the expected frequencies (Best, 1981)

Results

The results of the study are presented below: All calculations are based on the chi-square statistical method. Out of the 380 copies of the questionnaire administered responses were obtained from 365 of the subjects. This figure is made up of 270 administrators and 95 union officials.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the funding role of the NUC and the effective management of Nigerian Universities.

Table 1: Distribution of Responses

S/N	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1.	The funding of Universities by the Government through the NUC has reduced the development of the Universities because of abuse by the NUC.	155	109	65	36
2.	The NUC uses funding as a control measure to compel Universities to comply with its rules and regulations which is an action often detrimental to the good administration of University education.	160	99	59	47

3.	The control of University grants which allows the NUC to delay unnecessarily the release of funds to the Universities often results in the stifling of University programmes.	171	102	57	41
4.	Often times the NUC is responsible for the funding problems of Universities because of the poor advice it offers the Government.	135	120	61	49

Table 2: Summation of Responses (Observed Frequencies)

Responses	Administrators	Union Officials	Total
Agree	208	55	263
Disagree	62	40	102
Total	270	95	365

Table 2 shows observed frequencies. In order to determine the expected frequencies the following formula is applied:

$$fe = \frac{(\sum f \text{ column})(\sum f \text{ row})}{\text{grand total}}$$

$$fe(a) = \frac{263 \cdot 270}{365} = 195$$

$$fe(b) = \frac{163 \cdot 95}{365} = 68$$

$$fe(c) = \frac{102 \cdot 270}{365} = 75$$

$$fe(d) = \frac{102 \cdot 95}{365} = 27$$

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

$$\frac{(208 - 195)^2}{195} + \frac{(55 - 68)^2}{68} + \frac{(62 - 75)^2}{75} + \frac{(40 - 27)^2}{27}$$

$$= \frac{169}{195} + \frac{169}{68} + \frac{169}{75} + \frac{169}{27}$$

$$= 0.867 + 2.485 + 2.253 + 6.259$$

$$= 11.864$$

Number of Cells = 4; $\chi^2 = 11.86$

degrees of freedom (df) = (r - 1) (k - 1) = (2 - 1) (2 - 1) = (1) (1) = 1

df = 1

χ^2 critical table value of 1 degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

Decision: Since the computed χ^2 value, 11.86 > the χ^2 critical table value, hypothesis No. 1 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the minimum standards requirement of the NUC and the effective management of Nigerian Universities.

S/N	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1	The role of the NUC as the sole monitoring and accreditation body is more than it can cope with because the Universities now have numerous programmes	180	90	60	35
2	The NUC does not have the capacity to effectively regulate and ensure minimum academic standards in all Nigerian Universities	170	101	53	41

3.	Rather than have only the NUC as the sole monitoring and accreditation body, other agencies such as the Nigeria Academy of Education, the Nigeria				
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Table 4: Summation of Responses (Observed Frequencies)

Responses	Administrators	Union Officials	Total
Agree	214	52	266
Disagree	56	43	99
Total	270	95	365

Table 4 shows observed frequencies. The expected frequencies are determined as follows:

$$f_e = \frac{(\sum f \text{ column})(\sum f \text{ row})}{\text{grand total}}$$

$$f_e(a) = \frac{266 \cdot 270}{365} = 197$$

$$f_e(b) = \frac{266 \cdot 95}{365} = 69$$

$$f_e(c) = \frac{99 \cdot 270}{365} = 73$$

$$f_e(d) = \frac{99 \cdot 95}{365} = 26$$

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

$$= \frac{(214 - 197)^2}{197} + \frac{(52 - 69)^2}{69} + \frac{(56 - 73)^2}{73} + \frac{(43 - 26)^2}{26}$$

$$= 1.467 + 4.188 + 3.959 + 11.115$$

$$= 20.729$$

Number of Cells = 4; $\chi^2 = 20.73$

degrees of freedom (df) = $(r-1)(k-1) = (2-1)(2-1) = (1)(1) = 1$
df = 1

χ^2 critical table value of 1 degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

Decision: Since the computed χ^2 value, $20.73 >$ the χ^2 critical table value, hypothesis No. 2 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between the interference on academic freedom by the NUC and the effective management of Nigerian Universities.

Table 5: Distribution of Responses (Observed Frequencies)

S/N	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1	The requirement for Universities to strictly comply with NUC guidelines hampers academic freedom	140	100	80	45
2	The excessive powers of the Executive Secretary of the NUC are anti-academic freedom	70	76	121	98
3	The overwhelming influence of the NUC on Vice-Chancellors does not encourage academic freedom and University autonomy	102	156	58	49

Table 6: Summation of Responses (Observed Frequencies)

Responses	Administrators	Union Officials	Total
Agree	154	61	215
Disagree	116	34	150
Total	270	95	365

Table 6 contains observed frequencies. The expected frequencies are determined below:

$$f_e = \frac{(\sum f \text{ column})(\sum f \text{ row})}{\text{grand total}}$$

$$f_e(a) = \frac{215 \cdot 270}{365} = 159$$

$$f_e(b) = \frac{215 \cdot 95}{365} = 56$$

$$f_e(c) = \frac{150 \cdot 270}{365} = 111$$

$$f_e(d) = \frac{150 \cdot 95}{365} = 39$$

$$\begin{aligned} X^2 &= \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} \\ &= \frac{(154 - 159)^2}{159} + \frac{(61 - 56)^2}{56} + \frac{(116 - 111)^2}{111} + \frac{(34 - 39)^2}{39} \\ &= \frac{25}{159} + \frac{25}{56} + \frac{25}{111} + \frac{25}{39} \\ &= 0.157 + 0.446 + 0.225 + 0.641 \\ &= 1.468 \end{aligned}$$

Number of cells 4; $X^2 = 1.47$

degrees of freedom (df) = $(r-1)(k-1) = (2-1)(2-1) = (1)(1) = 1$
df = 1

X^2 critical table value of 1 degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

Decision: Since the computed X^2 value, $1.47 <$ the X^2 critical table value, hypothesis No.3 is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 4: No significant relationship exists between the political influence of the NUC in the appointment of Governing Councils and the effective management of Nigerian Universities.

Table 7: Distribution of Responses

S/N	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1	The political influence of the government through the NUC in the appointment of Governing Councils is inimical to the growth of Nigerian Universities	165	95	65	40
2	The proposal that Governing Councils should source for funds to run the universities as a condition for full autonomy will only commercialize and reduce the quality of University education in Nigeria	171	90	60	54
3	The appointment of non-professionals in education-related fields as members of Governing Councils based on political consideration most often reduces the quality of university education	155	88	67	55

Table 8: Summation of Responses (Observed Frequencies)

Responses	Administrators	Union Officials	Total
Agree	202	53	255
Disagree	68	42	110
Total	270	95	365

Table 8 contains observed frequencies. The expected frequencies are calculated below:

$$fe = \frac{(\sum f \text{ column})(\sum f \text{ row})}{\text{grand total}}$$

$$fe(a) = \frac{255 \cdot 270}{365} = 189$$

$$fe(b) = \frac{255 \cdot 95}{365} = 66$$

$$fe(c) = \frac{110 \cdot 270}{365} = 81$$

$$fe(d) = \frac{110 \cdot 95}{365} = 29$$

$$\begin{aligned} X^2 &= \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} \\ &= \frac{(202 - 189)^2}{189} + \frac{(53 - 66)^2}{66} + \frac{(68 - 81)^2}{81} + \frac{(42 - 29)^2}{29} \\ &= \frac{169}{189} + \frac{169}{66} + \frac{169}{81} + \frac{169}{29} \\ &= 0.894 + 2.561 + 2.086 + 5.828 \\ &= 11.369 \end{aligned}$$

Number of cells = 4; $X^2 = 11.37$

degrees of freedom (df) = (r-1)(k-1) = (2-1)(2-1) = (1)(1) = 1

df = 1

X^2 critical table value of 1 degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

Decision: Since the calculated X^2 value, 11.37 > the X^2 critical table value, hypothesis No.4 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant relationship between the interference on university autonomy by the NUC and effective management of Nigerian Universities.

Table 9: Distribution of Responses

S/N	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1	The apparent master –servant relationship between the NUC and universities does not promote university autonomy	165	95	65	40
2	The appointment of vice-chancellors in which government shows and exhibits overwhelming political interest through the NUC does not guarantee university autonomy	171	90	60	54
3	Inadequate funding by the government through the NUC undermines university autonomy, and therefore, hampers the development of the universities	155	88	67	55

Table 10: Summation of Responses (Observed Frequencies)

Responses	Administrators	Union Officials	Total
Agree	212	57	269
Disagree	58	38	96
Total	270	95	365

Table 10 contains observed frequencies. The following computations show expected frequencies:

$$f_e = \frac{(\sum f \text{ column})(\sum f \text{ row})}{\text{grand total}}$$

$$f_e(a) = \frac{269 \cdot 270}{365} = 199$$

$$f_e(b) = \frac{269 \cdot 95}{365} = 70$$

$$f_e(c) = \frac{96 \cdot 270}{365} = 71$$

$$f_e(d) = \frac{96 \cdot 95}{365} = 29$$

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

$$= \frac{(212 - 199)^2}{199} + \frac{(57 - 70)^2}{70} + \frac{(57 - 71)^2}{71} + \frac{(38 - 25)^2}{25}$$

$$= \frac{169}{199} + \frac{169}{70} + \frac{169}{71} + \frac{169}{25}$$

$$= 0.849 + 2.414 + 2.761 + 6.760$$

$$= 12.784$$

Number of cells = 4; $X^2 = 12.78$

degrees of freedom (df) = $(r-1)(k-1) = (2-1)(2-1) = (1)(1) = 1$
df=1

X^2 critical table value of 1 degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

Decision: Since the calculated X^2 value, 12.78 > the X^2 critical table value, hypothesis No.5 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Discussion of Results

The study revealed that funding is significantly related to the effective management of universities in Nigeria. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the result. The funding of universities in Nigeria (especially federal universities) is the responsibility of the Federal Government through the NUC. The NUC has the powers to withhold funds from universities that fail to comply with its control measures and this makes the universities

subservient to the NUC. This prompted Fabunmi (2003, p. 287) to comment thus; "the quest for quality control of the NUC and universities' reliance on the body for funds have eroded self sustenance from the university system". Inadequate funding and lack of financial autonomy are two factors that have continued to challenge the effective management of university education in Nigeria.

Tables 3 and 4 show a relationship between the NUC minimum standards requirements of universities in Nigeria. The respondents were of the view that the NUC is not adequately equipped and broad enough to singularly enforce minimum standards requirements in all Nigerian universities. This finding agrees with the observation of Ejiogu (2003, p.67) which believes that the role of the NUC as the sole monitoring and accreditation body for all universities and their numerous programmes is not feasible. It implies that the practice does not enhance the effective administration of university education. Therefore, the control of standards should be decentralized.

The result showed that the interference of the NUC on the academic freedom of universities does not affect the effective management of the universities. This is shown by the calculated X^2 , 1.47 which is less than the critical table X^2 with a value of 3.84 prompting the acceptance of hypothesis No.3. This finding is not in tandem with the observation of Awopute (2000) and ASUU(2000) who believe that the NUC has contributed to the poor management of Nigerian Universities by encroaching on their academic freedom. Tables 7 and 8 show that the influence of the NUC in the appointment of university Governing Councils is significantly related to the effective management of Nigerian Universities. This situation does not promote institutional autonomy and growth as appointments of Governing Councils have often been purely political and without adequate consideration for integrity and ability to perform. The loyalty of the appointees to the appointing officer is usually considered most paramount and as Okoroma (2001) found out it was a consensus that the appointments of Governing Councils be removed from the sphere of political influences. This observation agrees with the view of Ojo (1990, p.67) that universities should manage their internal affairs without undue interference from outside bodies and most especially from governments that fund them. Political interference by the NUC is not in line with the recommendation of the Ashby commission of 1960 which provides thus:

A university has to be insulated from the hot and cold winds of politics. The responsibility of its management must be vested in an autonomous governing council (Ashby 1960, p.31)

The study also revealed a significant relationship between the interference on university autonomy and the effective administration of Nigerian universities. This finding shows that the interference by the NUC in university autonomy has impeded the overall development of Nigerian Universities. Adeniran (2000, pp.2&3) defines university autonomy to include; administrative autonomy, academic autonomy and financial autonomy. Administrative autonomy implies that University Governing Councils will appoint and remove vice-chancellors as well as determine the remunerations and conditions of service of staff. Academic autonomy grants university senates the powers to determine the contents and details of curricula and general academic programmes. On the other hand, financial autonomy means more and better funding for universities so as to strengthen them to be globally competitive.

This study covered the three aspects of university autonomy and revealed that the NUC has an overwhelming influence on all aspects of university activities making university autonomy a mere dream expression. Tables 9 and 10 reflect this position.

Conclusion

University education is a very serious venture because it helps in determining the pace of development. Therefore, the issues of university management for good results should be of a great concern. The effort of this paper has demonstrated that concern. While the paper has focused on the supervisory role of the NUC in the management of university education in Nigeria the results of the investigation have a general application for university management. The expositions of this study and the suggested remedies have the potential to improve on the management of university education.

The role of adequate funding in the effective management of universities cannot be overemphasized. The provisions of adequate facilities and personnel depend on funds. In this regard the NUC has not fared well as the study revealed significant interferences which reduced or checked the funds available to the Universities. On this score it is suggested that funds for the universities should be disbursed to them directly by the Government through the Ministry of Education rather than the NUC which is an agency of the Ministry. The role of the NUC as the only body that controls academic standards in Universities has become

ineffective because it lacks the capacity to play the role effectively. In line with the recommendation of Ejiogu (2003) this paper suggests a decentralization measure. The monitoring and accreditation exercise designed to ensure minimum standards should be carried out by other bodies such as the Nigerian Academy of Education, the Nigerian Academy of Science, the National Academy of Arts, and the Social Science Research Council which are autonomous bodies. This will eliminate the type of controversy that followed the NUC accreditation exercise of 2005 in which some Vice-Chancellors contested the authenticity and credibility of the exercise (Dike 2006, p.22).

The issue of academic freedom for universities is crucial because it is a necessary instrument that guarantees the search, exploitation and use of knowledge for the purpose of development. The study showed that the NUC does not interfere with the academic freedom of universities in Nigeria. This result notwithstanding, it is the opinion of the paper that the Senates of Universities should be granted more powers to enable them expand or contract their academic programmes as the needs may arise instead of the requirement that they first obtain permission from the NUC prior to such an exercise.

Governing Councils are provided by law to assist with policy matters, supervision and to ensure accountability in the management of Universities. It is the duty of Governments to constitute them. The study has revealed that the appointments of Vice-Chancellors and Governing Councils are usually politicized. This practice has often hampered University autonomy and therefore the management of Universities. The NUC facilitates the political interference of Governments in University affairs. The paper is of the view that the NUC should be divested of the powers that enable it to influence funding and appointments into University positions as the only measure that can guarantee administrative autonomy, academic autonomy and financial autonomy to Nigerian Universities. In order to give effect to the suggestions made here it is imperative to take steps to amend the statute, which established the NUC.

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