

AUTONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

This paper examined the issue of autonomy in the context of administrative functions, principles and roles needed for the formulation, implementation and execution of policies in higher institution for the purpose of harnessing stated goals and objectives of the University. The implementation of the administrative functions in Nigeria public Universities has been marred and underpinned by inevitable educational issues. Such factors are: interpersonal relationships within the University, failure on the part of administrative head to meet stipulated programme achievement amongst others. Administrative formation existing in the Universities (despite differences in structure) according to Federal State or Private ownership as applicable to Nigeria focused on the principal officers and bodies who perform the administrative function were also theorized. Several views on autonomy as a concept were also examined and the paper concludes that there are benefit derivable from autonomy, if healthy administrative responsibilities in the University be achieved. Hence the paper recommends that University administration must be free to air out the result of findings from research without fear of backlash; promotion of university culture on merit and fairness be encouraged, reduction of the perennial tensions that allows a fair play level ground for the smooth running of academic activities be encouraged, clashes and strikes between government and University hierarchy manipulation could be resolved through round table discussion involving all stakeholders when Universities allowed to design their own

programs, empower to create and execute them they will be morally bound to ensure all activities within the institutions succeed.

Keywords: University, Administrative, Responsibilities and Autonomy.

Introduction

Higher education in today modern world has become a commodity marketed across border with multiple providers at national and international level with scope of administrative practice especially administrative style that are needed for qualitative education and workforce capacity building for the advancement of productivity. Madumere (2008) posited the world has become aware of the fact that the higher education (university) is one of the main source of the knowledge that contributes so much to development and modernity. Knowledge production, dissemination and its absorption by any society makes all the difference between a rich country and a poor one or even between a rich home and a poor home Infact provision of various level of education is usually being determined by the funding and resources allocation assigned thereof. In Nigeria, the Federal Government has been the main financier of public higher education until very recent when states higher institution sprang up. Notably, the states governments are responsible for financing and staffing of the institution under their control based on the constitutional arrangement, hence education becomes the responsibility of the Federal, State Private Ownership.

Invariably, the nature of higher education makes it capital intensive and as such the country higher education like the university needs a properly planned, organized and administration function in the context of political, social and economic design for its development. This is because a nation ideology which has been influenced by the politics and social affairs of her society has affected the education pattern and thereby in turn affects the economic growth of both the people and the society. Denison, Schultz and Vaisey in Madumere (2008) posited that the economy of any nation depends on how well her education has been planned and the results of her planning process. Hitherto, the planning process includes the setting up of goals to the implementation stage, taking into consideration whatever models that need be applied and timing. Obviously, the bulk of a nation professionals and technocrats' workforce are produce by the university. This require a well experience qualified university administrator who is well verse in administrative functions that are needed for qualitative excellence and that which will bring about quality in research teaching, science and technology. These are all hubs in which a nation technological advancement rely upon among others in ensuring qualitative education.

The functions and role perform by an administrator in the university must from time, to time in the view of Madumere (2008) be advantageous for efficiency. This also implies that planning and administrative roles in the university must be unique, unique in the sense that there is no formal system in the society or a nation that does not depends on education. Obviously, all other formal system or formal organization of any society depend on products from education especially products from higher education like the university for their functioning and

effectiveness. Evidently there is anti-productivity these days, which therefore necessitate the need to harmonize the required administrative function, and roles for the purpose of achieving stated goals and objectives in ensuring qualitative education. The administrative functions in this regards include planning, organizing, reporting, directing, staffing, communicating, controlling coordinating, budgeting.

The Issues

The implementation of the administrative functions/roles in Nigerian public universities has been marred and underpinned by some inevitable educational issues that have great effect in the provision and sustainability of qualitative education at the Ivory Tower. Such underpinning factors are:

- Interpersonal relationships within the university system
- Failure on the part of the administrative head to meet stipulated programme achievement
- Failure to build and lead the team of staff for efficiency
- Inability to charge workers and work relationship toward productivity goals that are needed for sustainability of qualitative education.

Kneitner (2017) identified that in any administration, efforts to work effectively with and through others in the organization are usually marred by factors, such as manipulation, abusive, untrustworthy, undue-demands, over critical attitude, poor team playing, poor communications etc. Nigerian public university as a formal organization is often been confronted with aforementioned, political power will and wishes, how to strike the proper balance between the universities and governments, how to address tensions between a reasonable accountability of the university public funds that are needed for sustainability on one hand and the abilities of the university administrators to take key decisions on the other hand. Also the question on how proper are the universities given autonomy to pursue what they are best known for (teaching & training, research, innovation and development) to mention among others.

Afe-Babalola (2014) affirmed that a complex paradox and dialectic faced by many university “is the challenge of how to balance university autonomy and freedom with public accountability and transparency”. Hence, ... some practical suggestion on how goals, objectives, administrative functions and role can be appropriately balanced to achieve a high quality university system in Nigeria become paramount and worrisome to the university administrator. A look at the administrative and implementation will help in positioning Nigeria public universities in the context of positivism that are needed for enhancing qualitative education of the university.

Conceptual Clarification of Administrative formation in the Universities

In the view of Olarenwaju (2018) (2020) administrative formation and mode of operation of universities in Nigeria differs and depends to some extent on their stated institutional objectives, the orientation of their Proprietor(s), and the university area of specialization if any.

University Administrative Structure

Etymologically, the structure and operational details of the university are usually clearly stated in document which is enacted into law or policy document of the university by the federal government or state government as required by the constitution as the case may be. In the Enabling Law or Decrees, governance structure of the university is well spelt including the university authority (administrative) power, and responsibilities, limitations to such power and authority of each of the organs and officers of the university are clearly stated. It is essential to state that despite the differences in the administrative control of the university (Federal or State, or Private owned) there are many communal areas in the administration of the Nigerian university.

According to Olarenwaju (2018) (2020), Universities are either organized in the Collegiate, School or Faculty systems. However, many Nigerian universities function through the following officers and bodies.

Visitor

Chancellor

Pro-Chancellor

Governing Council

Vice-Chancellor and other Principal officers.

Senate

Congregation and Convocation

Colleges/Schools/Faculties/Departments

Hitherto, the functions, duties and responsibilities of the aforementioned officers and bodies give members of the Council the feel of how a university operates. Notably, the visitor to the university is usually the head of the organization that own the institution (Mr. President in the case of Federal Universities and the Governor, for state-owned). The visitor sometimes, do not fully involved in the administration process of the institution, but has the responsibility of ordering a periodic review of the operations of the institution this responsibility is known as visitation.

The Chancellor, is the titular or ceremonial head of the university He awards the degrees of the institution at convocation ceremonies when he is present. Olarenwaju (2018)(2020) posited that the Chancellor could either be a revered traditional rulers or an accomplished senior citizen.

The Pro-Chancellor is the chairman of the Governing Council and as well head some committees of Council such as finance and general purposes committees and Tenders Board and he is more directly involved with the operation of the institution than either the Visitor or Chancellor. He plays a critical role and function in the university council he leads. Amadi (2011) points out that the Pro-chancellor takes precedence before all other members of the university except the Chancellor, and except the Vice-Chancellor when acting as Chairman of congregation or convocation and except the Deputy-Vice- Chancellor when so acting, and the Pro-Chancellor

shall, when he is present, be the chairman of all meetings of the Council. The Pro-Chancellor is appointed by the Head of State for a period of four years. Mere political jobbery should not be the main yardstick since some of those who came in through party patronage have failed woefully because they were unwilling to understand the ethos of the university system. The amended University Act details stated that the Pro-Chancellors appointment is usually on the recommendation of the Council. There is no specific qualification for an appointment to the post of Pro-Chancellor. This implies that previous, experience in university administration do not really serve as criterion for appointment, nevertheless retired Professor or former Vice-Chancellor have occupied the post on many occasions.

The Governing Council is another administrative ambit of the university which consists of those appointed by the proprietor(s) usually from outside the institution representing public interest, ex-officio members and those elected from the university representing senate and congregation. Noteworthy, the criteria for membership of the Governing Council according to Amadi (2011), are; *membership should have good representative of the community in which the institution is located, members must be knowledgeable about administration of higher education, members must be open and transparent in decision making, membership should be of people who are willing to contribute in a regular and effective ways to the business of the Governing Council. The duties of the Governing council includes; the development of the strategic plan for the institution; ensuring that government, institutional and community priorities are adequately reflected in the plan, also ensure that the institution is appropriately organised, managed and adequately resourced; putting in place a satisfactory quality assurance, financial and audit arrangements, closely monitoring students' enrolment, retention and achievement as well as being supportive of general welfare and development of all staff and; responsible for appointment, development and appraisal of the senior staff in the higher institution (University).* Olarenwaju (2018) (2018) summarily posited that the Council is charged with the general control and superintendence of the policy, finance and property of the university including its public relations. The council is therefore regarded as the supreme governing authority of higher education.

The Vice-Chancellor by function is the Chief Executive and Academic Head of the University. Olarenwaju (2018) noted that the Vice-Chancellor is responsible for the day-to-day managerial role of the institution. He/she and other very highly placed officers of the institution, such as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor(s), Registrar, Bursar, and University librarian are supposedly collaborate in the running of the affair of the university. Amadi (2011) stated the Vice-Chancellor and other principal officers of the university are vested by law with the general function of directing the activities of the institution for which purpose they are advised and assisted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor(s) and other principal officers. The Vice-Chancellor significantly is an ordinary member of the council, while the Pro-Chancellor is the Chairman of the Council. Admittedly, while Pro-chancellor is on a par-time appointment, most of the policies of the Council are normally carried out by the Vice-Chancellor and his staff. Notably, while the

Vice-Chancellor is appointed by the visitor on the recommendations of Council, the other Principal officers are appointed by Council on the recommendations of the Senate and other bodies with the authority to do so.

The senate: This accordingly serves as the supreme body on academic matters. The formulation of academic policies, including the organisation and control of all academic activities of the higher education (university) is the duty and responsibility of the senate. Olarenwaju (2018) mentioned, that the Senate is charged with the responsibility of initiating and supervising courses of studies and organizing as well as controlling teaching, the admission and discipline of students and the promotion of research. The Senate is presided over by the Vice Chancellor as the chairman while Professors and heads of various academic units make up its membership in either Collegiate or faculty structure in the university. The Vice-Chancellor, the two Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Deans of either faculties or Colleges, Heads of Departments, Director of Institute Centre, all Professors, the University Librarian and member of academic staff elected by the faculties or congregation or those appointed by the Chief Executive as specified in the university Act, in this regard it is by the authority of the senate that the Chancellor, or in his absence, the Vice-Chancellor awards the degrees of the university to deserving students at convocations as such degrees are only awarded after the formal approval by Senate.

Congregation and Convocation: Amadi (2011) stated that congregation is the general assembly of all graduate members of the university staff, both academic and non-academic. Statutorily, the Vice-Chancellor is its chairman and the congregation has the general function of serving as a forum for discussing any higher education problem or issue and making recommendations to Council and Senate on which two bodies it is represented. On the other hand, the convocation is the assemblage of the staff and students of the university, constituted usually for the purpose of award of degrees and diplomas as approved by the senate.

Colleges/Schools/Faculties/Departments

Faculty is governed by a Faculty Board, which broadly controls the academic programme of the faculty, subject to senate approval. In order that senate may not be over-burdened by details, a good deal of the functions is delegated to the Faculty Board. The Chairman of the Faculty Board is the Dean who is elected for a specified period of time from among the Professors in the particular Faculty or College depending on the structure operated in the university. Olarenwaju (2018) similarly expresses that Colleges, Schools, Faculties, Departments are academic units which all report to Senate and have different levels of responsibilities, the teaching, learning and research activities of a university are carried out through them. Related schools or faculties makes up a College, while related Departments make up a Faculty. A College is headed by a Provost, a School or Faculty by a Dean, and a Department by a Head. The Departments are the smallest academic units where teaching, learning and research work are carried out usually on the basis of single subject areas in which degrees are awarded, as part of the overall portfolio of a Faculty, School or College of a University. Part of the function of the Dean and the Provost is to present at convocation for the conferment of degrees, persons who have qualified for degrees of

higher education at higher education examination held in the various departments within the Faculty or College. Further, there are other statutory organs in the university aside earlier mentioned ones that are also prominent in the internal management and carried out administrative function's contributing to the enhancement of quality and standard in the university system. The organs compliment the administrative function of the principal officers and they function side by side for the smooth coordination of both academic, non-academics and material resources in the production, enhancement and achievement of set goals and objectives of the University. To mention We have the following by simple organogram aside the Vice-Chancellor;

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Registrar

Bursar

University Librarian

The Dean of various Faculties or Colleges

The Dean of Students Affairs Division and Unit

Heads of various Department or programme Units.

All graduates of the university i.e. Alumni Association and undergraduates' students of the institution.

Interestingly, Altbach (2005) notes that the different models for higher education (Administrative roles) throughout the world do share a common heritage. Similarly, Coldrake, Stedman and Little (2003) in Amadi (2011) expresses that internationally, higher education (university to mention) are governed by differentiated structures of management. We theorized this management structures are the purpose of proper governance of which functionality would not be enhanced without the indices of Autonomy. Autonomy, in relation to internal structure, planning, organizing, reporting, directing, staffing, communicating, controlling, coordinating, budgeting, leading, motivating and decision making. On university function which require proper governancy, Kezar and Eckel (2004) in their analysis stated that policy formations and decision making in the university require governance in a multi-facet concept and would be recognized with elements of autonomous actors with varying degrees of independence, interdependence and commitment to the external stakeholders, state and national government.

The question which arises from above position on administrative functions and autonomy of the university activities and functionality is if autonomy in higher education is essential to the advancement, transmission and application of knowledge why the violation of procedures for the appointment of the University Vice-Chancellor? Why the erosion of the powers of Council as statutory employer? Why the powers of the Senate as the Supreme organ in proper application and implementation of university administrative functions being eroded? Madumere (2008), Amadi (2011) and Olarenwaju (2018) claimed hindrance on university autonomy are historical and of course inevitable. In the past, universities in Nigeria were to large extent autonomous. The

military government in 1973 started what would be called first “threat letter” or “threat signal” to university autonomy. A trade dispute between the Governing Council and the universities teachers in 1973 on the review of the condition of service led to strike by the University Lecturers then. The Governing Council saw the need for the review of the condition of service and made effort to secure government approval, which was thwarted by top official of the Federal Ministry of Education. The crisis reached a height when the then visitor, General Yakub Gowon in a national broadcast ordered the university teachers back to work or face dismissal and ejection from their official residences. Albeitly, the mechanism used were as follows:

- The integration of the universities into the civil service, which lowered the prestige, status and effectiveness of the university as the Federal Ministry of Education began to see itself as the ‘Landlord’ of the newly constructed structure;
- Governments promulgation of decrees. After the order and through these decrees, some bodies were empowered in such a way that the activities of the universities hitherto conducted internally by the university without interference became willed to some other bodies.
- Creation of Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB in 1978) eroded the power of universities to determine student intakes and criteria for admission.
- Expansion of scope of operations of National University Commission, (NUC) usurped the power of the university senate to regulate curriculum and syllabus.
- The promulgation of the Decrees 49 of 1998 and 10 of 1993 strengthened NUC’s power and stripped the universities of their power to develop new programmes and made to realign their courses to match labour market requirements except with the approval of NUC;
- The appointment of Sole Administrators to some Universities in Nigeria by the Federal Military Government between 1992 and 1998. The decrees that brought the Sole Administrators to power suspended the power of the council, senate and vice-chancellor and confer these powers on the Sole Administrators;
- The military government in 1975 promulgated decree No 23 of 1975 which back up government to take over the regional universities;
- Decrees which altered the enabling laws, reduced the power of the Governing Council and altered the position of the visitor from being ceremonial to that of someone who can intervene in daily administration of universities;
- decree No 23 of 1975 vested the power to appoint and remove the vice-chancellor by the Head of the Federal Military Government instead of a Joint Committee of council and senate on behalf of university council;
- Decree No 23 of 1975 also eroded the powers of council as statutory employers and erosion of power of the senate as the highest decision making body over academic matters.

Associated with above are external perspectives that have also jeopardized the functionality of the university administrative functions/role for quality to mention there were:

centralization of the universities system by NUC who had metamorphosed from advisory roles to a full pledge commission, exercising supposed internal power of the university management administrative functions thus now; accredit programmes, approve the establishment of department and faculties, insisting on a minimum academic standard, engaging in teaching function of academic staff through the Virtual Institute for Higher Education Pedagogy (VIHEP); undertaking sabbatical placement, assessing academic journals, ranking of universities, evolving a draft curriculum on entrepreneurial studies and of recent the designing of curriculum (CCMAS) without due involvement of University Academia, centralization of admission which negate the initial plans when the early institutions were established, of that time each institution conducted its entrance examination, council dominance by government appointed officials to the detriment of minority representation of university community members serves as another avenue of breach of autonomy in the Nigerian Universities.

What can be done to enhance autonomy and sustainability of Administrative Functions ?

In order to maintain a smooth and itch free functioning of University autonomy and sustain administrative responsibilities in the university. Management of the Ivory Tower supposedly, should function and operate in the following directions:

Administrative Effectiveness and Responsibilities

The Vice-Chancellor as the Chief Executive of the University work with and through other institutional planners, therefore do not do the planning alone nor by himself. He must ensure in the view of Nte(2010) that:

'objectives, plans, policies, rules, regulations and operating procedures are effectively communicated to the people (member of the university) where performance is needed to attain the set objective'. Interestingly, the chief executive (Vice-Chancellor) should be a good forecaster, whereby he/she is expected to look at the present and compare it with the past to be able to predict the future.

Further, planning as a function of Vice-Chancellor in decision making required that he/she should work with expert/technocrats versatile in planning techniques so as to be able to arrive at good decision among several alternative. Invariably, planning guides the Vice-Chancellor and other administrative heads on what to be done and how to do it, so as to accomplish the set goals after determining in advance what is to be done. Proper planning bridges, the gap between where the tertiary institution (university) is (present status in term of performance) and where it wants to be in a desired future (achievement).

Effective planning by the university management makes it possible for things to occur while making choice among alternative choice. Administrative achievements and accomplishment is determined by the efforts put in place in the institution amidst challenges or internalize problems. Making a balance between human and material needs and institutional objectives, goals becomes imperative for both immediate and future goals of the university. Knowing fully well that

planning is the most basic of all the administrative functions of the executive for sustainable qualitative education.

Axiologically, administrative functions in any formal organisation as the case with the university ought to value planning for effective service delivery, therefore, there should be,

- Provision of directions and sense of purposes by the management in the university.
- Proper plans as roadmaps showing the way and giving direction toward operation of activities under acceptable ethics, norms and values.
- Adaptation of the university structure and system to the dynamic environment that accommodate the university. The educational system has to adapt itself to the basic demand of the environment and its constituencies, by attempting to transform the external situation and changing its internal programmes to meet and suit every conditions for the purpose of enhancing sustainable qualitative university education.
- Gratification within the system as a means of goals achievement in the Ivory Tower. Gratification in this sense means reward given for good job, excellent performance this is a typical indicator of goal attainment for academic achievement, resource acquisition and quality of knowledge given to the students and services delivery.
- Integration of all goals attainment indices needed for sustaining qualitative education as posited in the autonomy objective and should be prioritized; among such are job satisfaction, interpersonal relationship, conflict resolutions, students' welfare and commitment, moral code and conducts ethics.
- Again, latency in relation to the organization (university) value integrating maintenance and sustainancy for effective qualitative educational system sustainability should be paramount and this require the essence for commitment and appropriate work activities, work environment behaviour on the part of every stakeholder in the organization (university) in relation to the acceptable norms and values that could also enhance autonomy of the Ivory Tower.

Expectedly, the latency indicator for performance should function through loyalty of every member of the university to the system, a promotion of central life interest in the school work, having a sense of identify with and in the institution, there should be individual motivation spirit to work and what Nte (2010) refers to as role norms congruence.

Organizing

From autological perspective, the role of organisation requires truthfulness and reality in the dissemination of functions. An important function of the Vice-Chancellor, is to face reality on ground in term of making purposeful structures for enhancement of rules for workers and directed towards achieving sustenance of qualitative education which can best be derived from real sense of autonomy practices. In the Universities, the Vice-Chancellor as Chief Executive assigned various tasks to different employees, grouping the personnel into sections, divisions, departments, faculties, formalizing the hierarchy chart. Added too, activities to be carried out by the Deans, Professors, Heads of Departments, academic staffs and non-academic staff are cosmologically related and connected. Etymologically, the headship (Vice-Chancellor) help to create a conducive environment for effective performance by personnel in the university who

carries out different tasks and coordinated for the purpose of yielding the achievement of the set goals of the university. Recruitment of personnel, deployment, training, departmentalization and delegation of authority for effective functional system require adequate autonomy. In reality, success of the Vice-Chancellor needs conformity with acceptable values because according to NTE (2010), it demands economic use of scarce resources, integrity, justice and fair play, free from external influence.

Achievement of quantitative and qualitative education require high level manpower production that are supportive of desirable and cherished values in the acquisition and development of new knowledge, skills, and attitude which the tertiary institution are known for in teaching, training, instruction, research and manpower production. Worthy of note is the enhancement of personnel growth which is a product of efficiency and effectiveness in performance of staff, enhancement of productivity and reduction of waste.

Again, Controlling and Supervision; as a value laden function, the Vice-Chancellor is saddled with the responsibilities of knowing what is on-going round the faculties, departments, section, units. With supportive roles by the delegated staff (Dean, HOD's, Director of Directorates, Unit Heads to mention but few), questions such as what is going on here or there, could be asked. Controlling is a sort of supervisory responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor, what often undermine this role is eroding of autonomy concept of the Ivory Tower. As reported by Agbato (1990) in Nte (2010) controlling is most basic critical of all the functions of the Vice-Chancellor, advantage, controlling indicates that actual performance is guided toward set goals. It's equally involves monitoring of activities to determine whether they conform to planned action. Added, monitoring is done so that events proceed based on the plan and so as to prevent deviation or variances from plans. Purposefully, controlling is used to correct lapses and errors. The Vice-Chancellor along with other principal officers, enforces controlling periodically to effect perfection in performances among personnel working in the institution. In an effort to exercise autonomy principle, the principal officers, as administrators could use the following control mechanism to ensure job performances and productivity such as what is happening here? What is the progress reports on task at hand? Etymologically, controlling as a mechanism is used to measure actual performance as a guide toward predetermined goals. Knowledge of an administrator in controlling helps the management of an organization to provides answers to philosophical questions like; what is going on or what is happening here?

Logically, control;

- probes what targets a leader is striving for,
- helps in ascertaining what the leader in an organization like the university is doing or can do to achieve the set targets.
- helps to determine what changes are required to help performances at expected time and level.
- epistemologically, provides means for knowing what is going on
- ethnically, helps staff to know what targets they have in view

- axiologically it emphasize that what should be controlled are the activities that would have significant impact on the achievement of set objectives and need for remedial action as the case may be, thus emphasize on morality of accountability.

Leading among other functions emphasize that the Vice-Chancellor administrative functions on the need to lead by example. A Vice-Chancellor is a leader of the institution; Nte (2010) reiterated it is incumbent, upon the Vice-Chancellor to lead, influence, induce, inspire other people in the institution. It is a reality that some people must lead and others must follow. The truism in this concept explained in every social organization such as the university, there must be a leader and there must be followers. There are many Professors in the university but the truth and reality is, one person is appointed as the leader of the institution as Vice-Chancellor. Once appointed, he/she becomes a leader and exhibits leadership trait that are transcendently endowed these are;

- Ascendency; which means he/she is given a higher position than other
- Power; he/she has force backing authority
- Authority; conferred with right as a leader to administer/govern an organisation
- Influence; having responsibility to coerce, lobby, influence other to abide by organisation law and order.
- Legal entity; his/her appointment is a provision of law or legal right.
- Legitimacy; The vice-chancellor in this capacity carries out his/her functions based on law, and decision he makes are legitimate decisions.

Communicating, connotes responsibility of sending and receiving information within (internal) and from (external) in an organisation. People, personnel, machine, environment, materials are involving, thus communicating is the most important administrative functions in the university structure and system. Communication metaphorically is the nervous system of a business or organisation. Its goes on all the time in an organisation. In the university, the Vice-Chancellor as the Chief Executive operates a communication network linking subordinates and super ordinates. Nte(2010) in his analytical prowess maintained that communication is a process of exchanging information between two persons or among people. Words, ideas, feelings, emotions, perceptions messages and opinion both official and non-official transmitted and expressed to and from people in an organisation is refers to as communication. Typically, message sent from the Vice-Chancellor which are thus received by any of the principal officers is communication. It can be vertically downward or vertically upward, for instance the Vice-Chancellor communication is vertical downward because his message by way of directive is to the subordinates, and when such communication is vertical upward then it is to super-ordinates like the Chairman of the Governing Council of the University.

However, for the purpose of autonomy, knowledge of communication by the Vice-Chancellor will greatly be of immense value because it;

- ❖ Contribute to increase in staff productivity when such communication is well send and properly decode by either the super-ordinate or subordinate.
- ❖ Brings about efficiency in job activities, each departments, faculty, units in the university harmoniously carries out assigned responsibilities.
- ❖ Helps in reduction and control of resource/material/waste and employees' efficiency and ability to control the administration of resources.
- ❖ Averts labour turn-over.
- ❖ Enhances achievement of objectives and goals of the university faster.
- ❖ Creates industrial peace and harmony by eliminating rumour and grape vine either in the department or in the faculties.

Motivating: the university functions through the Vice Chancellor, requires the ability of the Vice-Chancellor to essentially motivate his/her subordinate staff so as to enhance good productivity in tune with the university's goals and objectives. The university employees should be well encouraged either through good remuneration, reward, job satisfaction so as to work for the betterment and purpose of achieving results. Available literature, recorded by Nte (2010) shows that poorly motivated, frustrated and unsatisfied employees can hardly perform to maximum level of their abilities. It is duty bound on the Vice-Chancellor to motivate staff (skill and unskilled) to put up desirable work behaviour to maximize their productivity in the university. Creating a suitable work environment which employees cherish will boost morale and interest of workers to work. The Vice-Chancellor needs to take into account the unique needs, expectation and level of aspiration of individual employees into consideration by so doing there will be a good motivational work climate that can produce maximum result through positive inducement, such as sponsorship, allowances, grants, welfare packages all these will motivate the subordinate internally; exceptional performances should be rewarded too.

The questions which arises at this junction is how best can the administrative functions examined above be realized if there is high tendency of erodement of the university autonomy? Going by the word of Fourie (2004) autonomy is a principle upon which the higher education system normally operates and through which operational stability and actualization of goals of the higher educational institution are ensured. In further engagement the survival of the higher education system is directly proportional to, or to a large extent dependent on the institutionalization of autonomy. In order to accomplish this noble goals (administrative function roles), autonomy must of necessity be enshrined in the system . ASUU had always raised alarm on the sanctity of university autonomy ... that state responsibility in the area of university funding notwithstanding ,must not translate into undue government meddling in university affairs(Amadi,2011).

Autonomy, Sustainance of University Administrative Roles

Fundamentally, administrative function is tied around the concept of planning, organizing controlling, conducting, reputing, directing, leading, budgeting, communicating motivating and others functions. The implementation of the said roles/functions helps in so many ways to maximize goals achievement, high level manpower growth and achievements, reduction of waste

and judicious use of available resources. In the university administration, administrative roles enable critical thinking prior to action and decision making, provides pervasive continuous function that involve complex processes of perceptions, analysis, conceptual thought, communication flows, decision and action directed to orienting the Ivory Tower toward the set goals. When all functions are put in place, there is no doubt that enhancement of growth both of human and material resource will lead to efficiency and effectiveness, accountability in all ramifications, and quality education in teaching, learning, training, research, innovation in new ground development and goal attainment will be achieved. These achievements in the view of Amadi (2011:51) is directly proportional to a large extent dependent on the institutionalization of autonomy. Despite all above aspiration it is a known fact that the administrative roles and other functions are regarded as pinnacle for goal attainment and has been marred with undue erodements. From historical perspective contentious and related dispute on university autonomy in Nigeria can be traced back to the 1970s when the sanctuary model of universities in Nigeria, which began with the establishment of the University College (later known as University of Ibadan) came under pressure with military dictatorship, the rest were history nevertheless.

What does Autonomy mean?

Amadi (2011) sees it as a principle upon which the higher education system normally operates and through which operational stability and actualization of goals of the higher educational institution are ensured. Fourie (2004) defines autonomy with reference to institutional autonomy as relative freedom of the institution to conduct its own affairs free from outside interference, whether from the state.

Similarly, Olarenwaju (2018) (2018) expresses the word autonomy is coined from the greek words 'auto normos' (auto means self and normos means law). Put together it means to give oneself one's own law. Explaining further Olarenwaju (2018) contextualized autonomy when he said it is the capacity of an individual or institution to make an informed, un-coerced decision by its own self; it is the state or condition of having independence or freedom to decide a course of action. The European Universities Association for example, defines, it has including organisational, financial, staffing and academic independence of universities. The 1997 UNESCO recommendation concerning the status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel, contain an elaborate elucidation of the concept of university autonomy when it defines University autonomy in paragraphs 17-21 as follows:

"Autonomy is that degree of self-governance necessary for effective decision making by institution of higher education regarding their academic work, standards, management and related activities consistent with system of public accountability, especially in respect of funding provided by the state, and respect for academic freedom and human rights"...

Again, UNESCO stated there are three essential components of meaningful university autonomy, these are;

Self-governance

Collegiality and Appropriate academic leadership.

Perhaps, self-governance in this sense refers to the ability of a university to exercise internal control or rule over itself. It refers to internal integrity and the ability of an institution to derive authority for its key decision from within. Collegiality refers to shared power and authority vested among colleagues. In an autonomous university, decision making powers are exercised amongst scholars, students, staffs and stakeholders in the academic environment in a fair and democratic way. As such, those decisions are autochthonous (i.e. home grown) and derive legitimacy from within.

In order to have most qualified members of the University community as head in various department, unit, section, autonomy as a yard stick to determine such appointment becomes fundamental. Autonomy in this sense refers to a meritocratic system in which the most qualified scholars are promoted to occupy leadership positions, based on the fundamental belief that power should be vested in individuals according to merit. Olarenwaju (2018) supported this view when he mentioned that, Nigeria's university system had all the three trappings of being autonomous, collegial and self-governing.

Similarly, Fourie (2004) corroborates that autonomy has two dimensions, namely; institutional and individual autonomy. The former (institutional) equally has two dimension; substantive and procedural autonomy. Substantive has to do with the power of the institution to determine its own goals and programme while procedural refers to the power of the institution to determine the means by which its goals and programmes will be pursued, the how of academy. Citing Berdahl (1990) in Fourie (2004) the essential ingredients of institutional autonomy includes;

Freedom to select staff and students, determine the conditions under which they remain in the university, freedom to determine curriculum contents and degree standards, freedom to allocate funds across different categories of expenditures; the necessary degree of independence from external control that university requires in respect of its internal organisation and governance, the internal distribution of financial resources, staff recruitment, the setting of the condition of study and the freedom to conduct teaching and research. (Fourie, 2004)

Indeed, as opined by Amadi (2011), autonomy in higher education implies that each institution must be governed according to the law that established it. Every institution has its law, edict or even decree which spells out the functions of the various organs, such as council, senate, congregation, faculty, department and institute. The other type of autonomy according to Fourie (2004) is Individual Autonomy. This autonomy in the view of the Confederation of Indian universities (2004) means academic freedom. It has to do with members of the academic community. That is scholars, teachers and students pursuing their scholarly activities according to the ethical rules, international standards and without outside pressure. Furthermore, they maintain that academic freedom like academic autonomy engages the obligation of each

individual member of the academic profession to excellence, innovation and advancing the frontiers of knowledge through research and diffusion of its results through teaching and publication. Albeitly, we can deduce that autonomy has been regarded as the corner-stone of the administrative functions of any higher education system. The sustainability of the executive administrative responsibilities, therefore, remain that of perpetual demand by university authorities to internally decide, run and execute their own programmes and policies.

We agreed with the position of Menzies (1939) the former Prime Minister of Australia who is credited to be the father of University education and reform in Australia. In his reform policies he advocated for importance of university autonomy, thus asked the following questions; what are we to look for in a true university? What causes should it serve? He then put forward answer in response to the above questions? Saying the university must be;

a Place of pure culture and learning,
a training school for the profession,
a liaison between the academician and the ‘good practical man’ (i.e. a bridge between theoretical learning and its practice application),
the home of research,
a trainer of character,
A training ground for leaders,
a custodian of the unfettered search for truth; and
an autonomous institution.

Menzie as reported by Olarenwaju (2018) (2018) was so emphatic in his words, that it is utterly undesirable that any government in a free country ‘like our’, should tell a university what and how it is to teach. Menzie further advocated that the way to a strong higher education system was to create the conditions that allow universities to thrive, and to give them the freedom to chart their own course and then get on with it.

Benefits of Autonomy in promoting university administrative responsibilities

Despite the bureaucratic demands of political correctness, reporting and regulation that stifle productivity and capacity to innovation and weighing down the university administrative functions due to backlash from funding agencies (government and the likes) yet, the university must be free to air out results of findings without fear of backlash. Hence, autonomy becomes imperative in a way as to;

- Promote a culture of merit and fairness within the university system.
- Reduce the perennial tensions, clashes and strikes between government and university hierarchy manipulations.
- Give university authorities freedom to chart their own course, implement without undue interference by government.

Conclusion

By and large when university authority is allowed to design, her own programs and empowered to execute and deliver them, she is morally bound to ensure that such programs and activities succeed. We joined numerous school of thought on autonomy to advocate that autonomy for the Ivory Tower administrator in carrying out statutory administrative function will lead to an increased sense of responsibility and ownership by universities, thereby eliminating some of the root causes of the recurrent strike actions in Nigeria.

Theorizing further, we agreed with Olarenwaju (2018) that university officials, like the judges, should have a feel of sense of independence and job security while executing their sacred function of knowledge dissemination,

administrative responsibilities without iota of fear or nepotism. A situation whereby government interferes in appointments, dismissal, promotion, tenure and administrative roles means erodment of the universities in their abilities to independently perform their primordial functions and roles without undue pressure. In this regard the policy statement of a free and democratic society as stipulated in the Nigeria National Policy of Education is achievable, hitherto, the internal organization and administration of each institution shall be its own responsibility (FGN,2014).

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