Relationship Between Internal School Crises and Effectiveness of University Education in Nigeria

Abdulganiyu Adebayo Tijani
University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Stephen Olufemi Afolabi
Kwara State University, Malete Nigeria

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNAL SCHOOL CRISES AND EFFECTIVENESS OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Article by Abdulganiyu Adebayo Tijani and Stephen Olufemi Afolabi

Abstract

The study was a correlation research design that investigated relationship between internal school crisis and university effectiveness in Nigeria. The target population was academic staff of three universities in a Nigerian State from which a sample of 611 academic staff was chosen using a stratified sampling technique. The instrument tagged "Internal School Crisis and University Effectiveness Questionnaire (ISCUEQ)" was adopted to collect data. Test-retest method reliability test was carried out to obtain reliability coefficient of 0.72. Mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product moment statistics were used to analyze data at 0.05 significant level. The finding revealed, among others, a significant relationship between staff/management Crisis and university effectiveness while Interpersonal crisis among staff was not significantly related with university effectiveness. It was recommended that the Nigerian government should fulfill every agreement entered into with workers union and the university administration should allow staff unions to operate on campus.

Keywords

- Internal School Crisis

- Management

- Effectiveness

- University Education

Introduction

As crisis is an inevitable friction in any organization, internal conflict in higher education is inescapable. Internal conflict that exists at every level in the academic world can be

negative causing deep rifts in the framework of educational institutions. Conflict can also be used as a tool for taking educational institution from level of stagnation to a new level of effectiveness (Holton, 1998). Efficient and effective management of internal crisis is fundamental to the institutional development of tertiary institutions. Nevertheless, the prevailing situations in Nigeria constitute a reversal of this reality as incessant closure of schools for months in the wake of unrest revolts and protests have become a regular characteristic of Nigerian tertiary institutions (Adeyemi, Ekundayo & Alonge, 2010).

In Nigeria, the goal of university education and institutional development of universities are reflected in the main functions and activities of teaching, research and publications, dissemination of existing and new information, service to the community, and being a storehouse of knowledge. In carrying out these functions, there are always internal conflicts within and among the categories of people within the university community, namely students, academics, administrators, non-academics and their unions. These categories of people have different purposes and expectations from the university. The administrators might clash with students and staff in carrying out their functions of recruitment, admission, examination and provision of welfare services for the staff and students.

The academics have a complex dual role of teaching and research which most often constitute source of tension for the individual's division of time, energy and commitment. The students' crises are perhaps the most complex of all. They are a heterogeneous group whose adolescence features a result in conflict with themselves and management of the activities that disrupt university program, boycott of lectures, loss of lives and properties (Anderson, 2006).

University effectiveness is a specific professional responsibility of academic and university management which includes teaching, research, community service and dissemination of knowledge, maintaining high morale, discipline and decorum among the staff, teamwork and motivation of staff. University effectiveness is the ability of university management to control and maintain school facilities and initiate projects. Monitoring performance, regular staff meetings, interaction, and encouraging staff participation in decision-making are all evidence of institutional effectiveness (Besong, 2001). The study aimed at finding out the extent to which internal crisis has influenced university effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

For decades, the Nigerian university system has been facing a great deal of crisis ranging from internal conflict between academic staff and university administrators, students and academic staff, students and university authorities, and non-academic staff and university administrators. The internal conflicts gave rise to distrust and hostility among professionals and academics which hamper smooth, effective, and efficient administration in the universities in Nigeria. Consequently, stakeholders in education seemed to develop a non-chalant attitude towards conflicts (Amadi, 2002).

This is unwholesome for the university community and Nigerian educational system as a whole.

It becomes expedient that internal conflict and effectiveness of university education in Nigeria be investigated to proffer feasible strategies for minimizing or avoiding it within the system with a view to achieving its objective. Internal conflict between individuals raises fewer problems than conflict between groups. Individuals can act independently and resolve their differences while members of groups may have to accept the norms, goals, and values of their group. The individual's loyalty will usually be to his or her own group (Armstrong, 2005).

Internal conflicts on campus are growing in numbers, kind, and complexity which makes the universities in Nigeria more challenging than what it was in the past. It has been observed that students' crises are becoming more rampant in the tertiary institutions and the resultant consequence has been to the detriment of the teaching – learning atmosphere (Adeyemi et al., 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The specific purposes of the study were to find out:

1. The relationship between internal school crisis and effectiveness of university education in Kwara state;

2. The relationship between staff–management crisis and effectiveness of university education in Kwara state and;

The relationship between interpersonal crisis and effectiveness of university education in Kwara state, Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

The study of this nature is relevant especially in Nigeria where there has been incessant strike in the university system. Students are seen locked out of the university gate as a result of failure of the government and university authorities. Therefore, the study will be beneficial to all the stakeholders of university education.

The management will be guided by the findings of the study on how to avert crisis in the system and see the need to collaborate with staff to ensure peace in the university.

The study hopes to make government aware of her important role in maintaining sanity in the university education in Nigeria and take necessary steps to restore sanity to the system.

Students will be able to enjoy a uninterrupted academic calendar by the time the expected synergy is ensured among the government, management and the staff in preventing crisis in the university system.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the causes of interpersonal crisis in Nigerian university system?

2. What is the nature of conflict among departments and faculties in the university system in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study:

NH$_1$:- There is no significant relationship between internal school crisis and effectiveness of university education in Nigeria.

NH$_2$:- There is no significant relationship between staff-management crisis and effectiveness of university education in Nigeria.

NH$_3$:- There is no significant relationship between interpersonal crisis and effectiveness of university education in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

THE CONCEPT OF INTERNAL CRISIS

Internal conflict has its origin in objectives differences, interest efforts, approaches, timing, attitudes and the likes within the institution. Internal conflict is defined as an overt behavior arising out of a process in which one unit seeks the advancement of its own interest in its relationship with others (Lammers, 2009). Internal conflict incorporates such protest movements in formal organization as promotion of interest, secession, and seizure of power. Internal conflict has also been defined as a situation of disagreement between two parties (Amusan,1996). Accordingly, an internal conflict situation is characterized by the inability of those concerned to iron out their differences and reach an agreement on issues of common interest. This inability manifests in one form of protest or the other such as strikes and other work disruption.

Ejiogu (1990) perceived internal conflict as mutual hostility and all kinds of opposition or antagonistic interaction including disagreements or controversies about ideas, values,

and ways of life. Ejiogu (1990) stated that internal conflict is structured conflict due to hierarchy of positions such as conflict between the boss and his subordinate (such as between lecturers and students), super-ordinate conflict – between the administrator and an authority over him (Vice Chancellor and the Visitor). Conflict could be based on the relationship between the object state and the perceived state of affairs by conflicting parties. This conflict could be veridical, contingent, displaced, misattribute or latent. Internal conflict is an activity that is almost totally negative that has no redeeming qualities. It is considered as dysfunctional, destructive, and as a catalyst for change, creativity and production (Posigha & Oghuvwu, 2009). Robins (2005) believed that internal conflict is a positive force necessary for effective performance. This approach encourages a minimum level of conflict within the group in order to encourage self-criticism, change and innovation and to help prevent apathy.

Internal conflict is an inevitable friction in any organization. Efficient and effective management of conflicts is fundamental to the development of any society but the prevailing situations in Nigeria universities constitute a reversal of this reality. Internal conflict in higher education is inescapable and it exists at every level of the academic world. While internal conflict can be negative, in that it can cause deep rifts in the framework of the institution, it can also be used as a tool to take the institution and the people in it from stagnation to a new level of effectiveness (Holton, 1998).

Conflict is conceived to be an outcome of behaviour which is an integral part of human life. Dunlop (2002) described internal conflict as a disagreement between two or more individuals or groups where each tries to make the other accept its view or position. In the same vein, Ugbaja (2002) perceived organizational internal conflict as any dispute, individual or group, that arises in the workplace which causes disharmony among a group of workers or between an individual and the management. Sinclair (2005) stated that internal conflict as disagreement between employees and their employers.

Most scholars view internal conflict as an activity that is negative without positive coronation while other schools of thought accepted it as dysfunctional, destructive, and a catalyst for change, creativity, and production (Posigha & Oghuvwu, 2009). Internal crisis arise from human interaction in the context of incompatible ends where one's ability to satisfy needs or ends depends on the choices, decisions and behavior of others. It is therefore, possible to argue that internal conflict is endemic to human relationships and societies, the result of interaction among people, an unavoidable concomitant of choices and decisions and an expression of the basic fact of human interdependence (Adejuwon & Okewale, 2009).

Wilmot and Hocket (1998) asserted that internal conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceived incompatible goals, resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals. It was said that internal conflicts bring both danger and opportunity to both parties that are involved. In other words, internal conflicts in tertiary institutions can be destructive and constructive. Bloisi (2007) stated that internal conflict is a disagreement between two or more parties who perceive that they have incompatible concerns. Individual, groups, departments,

organizations, and countries do experience conflicts whenever an action by one party is perceived as preventing or interfering with the goals, needs, or actions of another.

In analyzing internal conflict situation in corporate organizations, McDaniel (2001) explained that internal conflicts arise because participants in an organization differ in their attitudes, values, beliefs, goals, and understanding. This implies that it is the difference in the orientation, personalities, and identities of individuals and groups within an organizational framework that brings about organizational conflict. Levine (2000) described internal conflict as any disagreement between workers and employers over a breach of the tent. As long as workers and employers abide by the terms of agreement there is bound to be organizational harmony. Disagreements arising from breach of the terms of employment contract have been known to result in organizational conflicts. Accommodation and resolution of conflict is the central theme and subject-matter of industrial relations.

Nwatu (2004) observed that in all organizations, employees and employers have common interests in getting work done. What constitutes the work, how the work should be done, and the price of labor services in the price of labor services in the work process constitute areas where the interests of the two parties vary. In Nigeria, agreements are usually reached between the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and government on funding of the universities, terms of employment and conditions of work, yet, the government fails in the fulfillment of her own side of agreement (Ubaku, 2003).

Some past empirical studies on crisis and institutional effectiveness

University effectiveness is the level of achievement recorded based on the available resources, time, and situation. Mamman (2008) defined institutional effectiveness as the achievement of set objectives, using the right quantity and quality of resources at the right time and place. Inadequate financial control could bring about mismanagement of school fund and non-attainment of the school's objectives. The educational institution effectiveness is described as the judicious control and use of available school funds for excellent carrying out school activities at the right time. In other words, effective administration of university is dependent on financial control, ensure quality research and publication as well as community services by the lecturers of tertiary institutions among other issues.

According to Yankey and McClellan (2003), institutional effectiveness is the extent to which a university has met its stated goals and objectives, and how well it performed in the process. Scott, Simon (2008) expressed that the term institutional effectiveness is usually deployed to contrast with development effectiveness. It focuses on the direct results of an agency's interventions, for which it can be held accountable, in contrast with development outcomes, which are the effect of many agencies interventions.

Olu and Abodesi (2003) investigated conflict management in secondary schools in Osun State, Nigeria. The findings showed that administration of secondary schools in the state was hampered by high rate of conflicts. Several types of conflicts were identified in the schools among which were conflicts between managements and staff, between staff and students, and between communities and schools. Oparanma, Hamilton, and Ohaka (2009) investigated the managerial strategies for conflict management in non-profit making organizations in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Akpotu, Unease and Unease (2008) carried out research on the perception of academic staff, non-academic staff and students regarding forcing, smoothing, detraction, arbitration, and changing the individual involved as effective intervention of conflict management techniques in all the twenty four 24 federal universities and all twenty six 26 state owned universities in Nigeria.

A study was conducted by Amadi (2002) on conflicts in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The findings revealed that the students as well as the academic and the non-academic staff agreed on factors responsible for conflicts in the University. The factors detected include erosion of university autonomy, under finding of the university, student's riots, ,and the existence of terrorist groups such as secret cults on the campuses and financial mismanagement.

Methodology

The research design for this study was a descriptive research of correlation type. There are three universities in Kwara state comprising of one federal university, state university, and private university each with a total population of 1,827 academic staff. Stratified random sampling was used to select the total sample of 611 academic staff from the three universities in the state (Table 1 in the appendix).

The Internal School Crisis and University Effectiveness Questionnaire (ISCUEQ) was used to gather data for the study. The ISCUEQ comprised of items on the causes and basis of internal school crisis completed by the academic staff. Face and content validity of the instrument was determined by three lecturers in the Department of Educational Management University of Ilorin. In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, test-retest reliability method was adopted on 50 staff at Crown Hill University located in another town and it was not part of the research study. The administration of the instrument to the same group selected was repeated after three weeks. The two set of questionnaires were scored separately then Pearson Product moment correlation was adopted to relate the two set of scores to obtain reliability co-efficient of 0.72

The data were analyzed using Statistical Packages of Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive statistic of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions raised for the study while inferential statistics of Pearson product moment correlation was used to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The p-values obtained were compared with 0.05 level of significance to determine the acceptance or otherwise of the hypotheses raised.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Question 1: What are the major identified causes of interpersonal crises in the university system.

Table 2 revealed the lecturers' perception and ranking of the identified causes of crises within the university system. Non recognition of staff union by the university administration was ranked first by the respondents with means score of 3.83, followed strictly by divide and rule policy of Heads of Department with mean score of 3.72. The least ranked in the opinion of the respondents were inadequate lecturers' space and lack of access to the university vice-chancellor with mean scores of 2.88 and 2.89 respectively. It could therefore be inferred from this finding that the Internal Crisis of the sampled universities might emanate from the result.

Question 2: What is the basis for crisis between the departments of the same faculty or colleges in the university system.

Table 3 revealed Staff opinion about the internal crisis between members of a department in the faculty or college within the university system. Mismanagement of the faculty fund was ranked first with mean score of 2.98. This is slightly followed by the negative attitude towards faculty activities by a particular member or department of the faculty. Poor academic performance of students of the faculty and nepotism over the university administration were ranked fourth and fifth with mean scores of 2.90 and 2.82 respectively. This result might be due to crisis that could be generated between the loyal member of staff to the Dean and other staff members who believed is transparency and proper accountability as emanated from mismanagement of the faculty funds by the Dean. Mismanagement of funds could also bring about inability of the Dean to provide the required facilities in the faculty.

Hypothesis H_{o1}: There is no significant relationship between internal school crisis and effectiveness of university education in Kwara state.

Table 4 indicated that the p-value of 0.001 is less than 0.05 level of significance implying that the null-hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between internal school crises and effectiveness of university education is rejected. Therefore, internal school crisis is a determinant of effectiveness of university education in Kwara state. Hence, the two variables are significantly related. The implication of this is that any form of crises within the university system either among staff or between staff and university administration will eventually has an impact on management effectiveness in the university system. This means that administrative effectiveness of the university management depends on crises or university of staff within the system.

H_02 : There is no significant relationship between staff-Management crisis and effectiveness of university education in Kwara state.

Table 5 revealed that the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance at 609 degree of freedom and thus implies that the hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between staff-university management and effectiveness of university education in Kwara state is rejected. Therefore, staff-management crisis is significantly related to effectiveness of university education in Kwara state. This means that staff- university management crisis is a determinant of effectiveness of university education in the state. The implication of this result is that the greater is the extent of crisis between staff and university Management, the weaker is the administrative effectiveness of the university system.

$H_0$3: There is no significant relationship between Interpersonal crisis and effectiveness of university education in Kwara state.

Table 6 indicated that the p-value of 0.052 is greater than 0.05 level of significance at 609 degree of freedom which implies the acceptance of the null-hypothesis which stated that there is no significant and relationship between Interpersonal crisis and university education in Kwara state. Therefore, interpersonal crisis has no significant influence on administrative effectiveness in the university system. The implication of this result is that interpersonal crisis among staff may not as such impacted on administrative effectiveness of university education in Kwara state.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are:

- Absence of due recognition to staff union was ranked first in as the major causes of crisis between staff and the university administration Kwara state.

- Mismanagement of faculty fund by the Dean was considered to be the primary basis of interpersonal crisis in the department and faculty of the university system.

- There is a significant relationship between internal school crisis and effectiveness of university education in Kwara state.

- There is a significant relationship between staff-management crisis and university education in Kwara state.

- There is no significant relationship between interpersonal crisis and university education in Kwara state.

Conclusion

The inability of the university administration to give expected recognition to the existing unions in the campus could generate rift and unhealthy relationship between staff and university management which in turn impacted negatively on university education.

Mismanagement of faculty funds by Dean, among others may result to interpersonal crisis.

The crisis between staff and university administration had much influence on overall effectiveness of university education. However, interpersonal crisis among staff has no influence on the effectiveness of the system. Regular payment of staff salaries and promotion enhance effectiveness of the university system.

Recommendations

From the results of the study, the following recommendations become imperative:

1. University administration should allow staff unions to operate on campus and maintain cordial relationships with them.

2. The funds of each department and faculty should be well managed with transparency and accountability by Heads of Department and Deans of Faculties to avoid interpersonal crisis.

3. The university management should address any impending crisis at the early stage of its manifestation

4. The Nigerian government should fulfill every agreement entered into with workers union. There should be no beach of agreement between the government and academic union or any other existing union in the university system.

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List of Tables

Table 1
Sample Frame of the Staff

S/N	Universities	Population	Sample Size
1.	University of Ilorin, Ilorin	1175	291
2.	Kwara state University Malete	513	217
3.	Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin	139	103
	Total	**1827**	**611**

Table 2
Staff perceptions on the causes of interpersonal crisis in the university system

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	$\overline{X}$	R
1.	Inadequate lectures space	69	209	133	200	2.88	7
2.	Being frustrated by the HODs	150	261	90	110	2.30	4
3.	Divide and rule policy of the HODs	200	200	111	150	2.93	2
4.	Indiscipline on the part of students to lecturers.	100	250	130	132	2.90	5
5.	Lack of access to Vice-Chancellor and other. Administrative staff	180	271	70	90	2.89	6
6.	Non recognition of staff union by the university administration	250	200	100	61	3.83	11
7.	Favoritism by administration	210	201	80	120	3.72	3

Table 3
Correlation of Interpersonal crisis and effectiveness of university education in Kwara state

S/N	Statement	SA	A	SD	D	$\overline{X}$	R
1.	Negative attitude towards faculty activities	250	240	55	66	2.97	2
2.	Indiscipline of the student in the faculty	180	190	100	141	2.94	3
3.	Poor students academic performance of the faculty	100	211	100	200	2.82	5
4.	Mismanagement of the Faculty fund by the Dean	200	300	50	61	2.98	1
5.	Nepotism over University Administration at the faculty	110	290	95	116	2.90	4

Table 4
Correlation of between internal school crisis and effectiveness of university education in Kwara state

Variable	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	Critical	P-value
Internal school crisis	611	52. 54	5.87			
				609	0.002	0.001
Effectiveness of University education	611	13.66	2.60			

Table 5
Correlation of staff - university management crisis and effectiveness of university education in Kwara state

Variable	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	Critical	P-value	Decision
Staff/Management crisis	611	50.23	5.87				
				609	0.002	0.001	Reject
Effectiveness of University education	611	1.87	1.98				

Table 6
Correlation of interpersonal crisis and university education in Kwara state

Variable	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	df	Critical	P-value
Interpersonal Crisis	611	34.23	2.78			
				609	0.251	0.052
Effectiveness of University education	611	11.83	1.85			