

Administrators' Leadership Traits as Correlates of University Effectiveness In Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between leadership traits and university effectiveness in Southwest Nigeria. It determined the level of effectiveness of university in southwest Nigeria. It also examined the predominant leadership traits among the university leaders in southwest Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised all the 3,418 academic and 8,937 non-academic staff in all the 7 federal universities and 11 states universities in Southwest Nigeria. The sample was 900 respondents, comprising 60 academic members of staff and 90 administrative staffs drawn from 6 universities in three states in Southwest Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling procedure which involved simple random, stratified and proportionate sampling techniques was used to select sample for the study. Two sets of instruments tagged "Leadership Traits Questionnaire" (LTQ) and "University Effectiveness Questionnaire (UEQ)" were used. The two instruments were validated by experts with LTQ and UEQ yielding reliability coefficients of 0.79 and 0.81 respectively. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the inferential statistics involving Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression analysis were used to test the hypotheses. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that the levels of university effectiveness in the university system were moderate. The study showed that there was significant relationship between leadership traits and universities effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria. The study showed that leadership decisiveness, leadership judgment and leadership loyalty correlated significantly with university effectiveness. Based on the findings, it was recommended that management of universities should improve on the existing level of university effectiveness in terms of quality graduates, stable academic calendar, adequate funding, research, community services, globalization, sporting activities and student support services and also that university leadership should place high premium on honesty, credibility, consistency, fairness, sense of duty, sound ethical and moral principles in dealing with their subordinates in order to enhance trust and cooperation among staff members and organisational effectiveness.

Keywords: leadership traits, inferential statistics, descriptive statistics, university effectiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in the development of a nation. As a major investment in human capital development, it enhances productivity and growth at both micro and macro levels. This explains why most countries of the world gives high level of commitment to this important sector. Its sustainability will contribute meaningfully to national development (Obasanjo, 2010).

Every level of Nigeria's educational system: primary, secondary, and tertiary institution (which includes university) contributed immensely to the development of the country. The university education system was a famous institution patronized by students with aspiration of becoming better citizen. University is a place where high-level personnel are trained and individuals can actuate their level of

performance in future tasks (Adekigbe, 2005). In order to achieve the aims of establishing university education in Nigeria, effective management of the university must attract high level of commitment from all stakeholders involved, that is, attention must be focused on the ways the university is being governed. This is because, effective management of the university could be a catalyst to achieving overall effectiveness of the system.

Academic excellence has been under severe examination in Southwest Nigerian universities by key stakeholders in the higher education market. There appears to be loss of faith in the output of the university system in Nigeria, as it appears the whole system is ineffective. Also, there seems to be ineffective leadership which reflect in the area of instability in the university academic calendar, delay

in students' admission process, students' result not process and release as and when due and inability to hold convocation programme at stipulated time, inadequate ICT facilities, lack of modern sporting facilities, poor recruiting and dismissal process, poor staff welfare services which seems to have rendered the system ineffective.

One of the productivities of the university system is the research. Advancement in research activities is an indication of academic growth in a university. It appears that the research carried out by some lecturers in universities in Southwest Nigeria seems to be of low quality. Observation has shown that some universities are lacking behind in research development and this is evident in the inability of some universities to sponsor their staffs for research trips within and outside the country knowing fully well that the academic development and promotions of their staffs largely depends on quality and extensive research. Further observations suggest that workers who manage to engage on research are not motivated and supported by the presentation on the standard of their research efforts at national and international conferences. This highlights the inefficiency of the university system.

The effectiveness of a university system is all about the degree to which predetermined goals of the university are successfully achieved. The extent to which members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are effective could make or break the university's performance, and it could go a long way toward determining the degree to which objectives are met and problems are solved within the university system. Effectiveness is important to every member of the university community as it gives satisfaction and as well leads to production of quality graduates.

The effectiveness of Nigerian universities appears to be one of the most essential factors in overcoming the current issues of managing universities in order to meet their goals of generating high-quality graduates, improving research and development, and providing better community services. The growing development of universities and their dominance over all facets of human life is evident. In achieving university goals, the indicators of effectiveness like decisiveness, judgment and loyalty as good leadership traits must be present. It appears universities in the Southwest, Nigeria are not effective as expected and they are far from achieving their goals in terms of the identified indicators.

Achieving effectiveness in the university system require an effective and sound leadership structure. There is need for leaders who are decisive and whose decisions are sound and fair to the interest of the university system and not to their personal self nor favoured individuals (Ejimabo, 2015). Decisiveness

refers to the capacity of university leaders to make sound decisions quickly. Gather all pertinent information and compare it to one another and arriving at a sound judgment by behaving calmly and quickly (Selart, 2005). This type of university leaders makes their selections in a straightforward, steady, and proficient manner. It appears that some university leaders lack this trait which makes them to always be at loggerheads with their subordinates and thus job performance and overall effectiveness is affected.

Giving accurate and fair judgment is another important trait of university leaders that could promote the effectiveness of the system. It appears that some university leaders are not fair in giving judgment on issues within their institutions. Leadership judgment is the capability of the leader to think about things unmistakably, steadily, and in a methodical fashion so that good decisions relating to academic matters that may affect the staff and the students are made (Yatvin, 1992). It was observed that some university leaders do not treat their employees reverently, actively listening to their concerns and identify with their points of view. In some cases, lecturers and non-teaching staff complained that management do not give them fair hearing on complaints and queries issued to them due to personal dislikes. This may lead to unfairness on the part of the subordinates who may seek the help of others to protest the injustice through legal or illegal means which may affect the effectiveness of the operations of the university.

High commitment from employees and employers could led to high productivity and growth of an organization (Dernovsek, 2008). This same assertion goes for the university education system where loyalty to the system will not only promote job effectiveness of staff but will also enhance high level of service delivery by the leaders which motivates the staff in putting in their best to assist the students in becoming better and productive citizens who can through university education proffer solutions to education and economic challenges of the country. However, observation has shown that some university leaders are not loyal to their subordinates and the university community. Loyalty of the university leaders means that one is committed to one's university, unit, and to seniors, ordinates and subordinates. Any university leader who is expecting operational effectiveness will also be ready to give steadfast loyalty up and down the chain of his expertise, to seniors, subordinates and ordinates. Doing this will not only win him/her the absolute loyalty of the subordinates but also leads to effectiveness of the system.

Therefore, the effectiveness of a university largely depends on the effectiveness of personal traits of the leaders who work towards achieving the objectives of

the university. Consequently, any university with leadership structure with quick and sound decisions, accurate and fair judgment and absolute loyalty is considered being effective as this will enhance administrative work, improve staff job performance, enhance academic research and improve students' academic performance which is the overall success of the university. To this end, this study purposes to find the relationship between leadership traits such as decisiveness, judgment and loyalty and University effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Decisiveness is an important trait of an effective university leader. It is an act of exercising justice and equity by making sound and unbiased decisions. Leaders are expected to make efficient decisions, even when data are scarce or solutions produce unkind consequences. It is preemptive and achievement oriented. Leaders driven by a need for decision clarity are often driven to find simple solutions with the help of an honest and rigorous objectivity. Often, they are not so easily affected by different emotions (Shaw & Lindsay, 2008). Extravert leaders has positive feelings, they are self-assured, active, talkative, thrill-seeking, ambitious, friendly, warm, and enthusiastic. They have advanced social skills and a wide range of interests. Extraverts are outgoing, social, gregarious, and self-assured. The urge for movement, excitement, and stimulation is also a feature of extraversion (Wallach & Wing, 2009). Extravert leaders are bold, outgoing, honest, friendly, and talkative. Extraversion refers to how social and talkative a person is, as well as how content they are with their interpersonal relationships

The best leaders make sound, defensible decisions in a timely fashion, especially in times of crisis and uncertainty. Managers at all levels of the organization are involved in constant decision-making and the quality of these decisions (both speed and soundness) accumulates and decides the fate of the organization (Davenport & Manville, 2012). Good leadership means doing things "with and through others." In other cases, this entails giving clear guidance and empowering and consulting workers to get things done most effectively and most effectively (Fuller & Sturm, 2017). Judgment necessitates that individuals, like leaders, decide that everything is contextual and always changing, yet may act promptly (Nonakam & Takeuchi, 2011). Therefore, judgment is not a systematic, consistent process unlike the logical decision-making process; certain judgments can be made in less than 5 minutes and others can be produced after weeks/months of reflection. Judgment also involves the creative aspect and imagination of an individual, which show its more artful nature. A thorough judgment is a key part of effective leadership (Lawrence, Lenk, & Quinn, 2009). Judgment permits leaders to blend their

knowledge of a situation with their intuition in making crucial judgments concerning people, strategies or problems inside their business (Dane & Pratt, 2007). Good judgment can lead to good decisions that lead to desirable results for leaders and their organisations (Tichy & Bennis, 2007).

Loyalty refers to an ability to commit or align to something: a person, a cause, an organization. According to Becker (1960), in Gashti and Farhoudnia (2014), loyalty is a process where someone with greater understanding of a job, bigger salaries, and better conditions refuses to accept the position in order to keep their existing work. Guillon and Cezanne (2014) discovered a substantial positive correlation between parameters related in the literature with employer loyalty and organisational performance. Due to the difficulties managers encounter when attempting to retain high-performing staff, several academics have claimed that loyalty is a performance component.

Purpose of the Study

The study investigated the means of achieving university effectiveness through leadership decisiveness, judgment and loyalty in Southwest, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. determine the level of effectiveness of the universities in South-West, Nigeria
- ii. examine the relationship between leadership decisiveness and universities effectiveness.
- iii. find out the relationship between leadership judgment and universities effectiveness.
- iv. determine the relationship between leadership loyalty and universities effectiveness.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What is the level of university effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria?
2. Is there any significant relationship between leadership decisiveness and universities effectiveness?
3. Is there any significant relationship between leadership judgment and universities effectiveness?
4. Is there any significant relationship between leadership loyalty and universities effectiveness?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between leadership decisiveness and universities effectiveness.

2. There is no significant relationship between leadership judgment and universities effectiveness.
3. There is no significant relationship between leadership loyalty and universities effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprises of all the academic members of staff, non-academic members of staffs and management team of the 7 Federal, 11 State Universities in Southwest, Nigeria. According to NUC (2019), there is 3,418 academic and 8,937 non-academic staff given a total population of 12,355, as at the time of the study. A sample of 900 respondents (60 academic staff members and 90 administrative staff members) was selected from six (6) universities using a multistage sampling approach that included simple random sampling, purposive sampling, and proportionate sampling.

Two sets of instrument titled “Leadership Traits Questionnaire and University Effectiveness Questionnaire” (LTQ) and University Effectiveness Questionnaire” (UEQ) were used to collect data for the study. Face and content validity of the questionnaire were ensured by experts. The test-retest method of reliability was used to test the reliability coefficient of the instruments which stood at of 0.79 and 0.81 were obtained for LTQ and UEQ respectively using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The data generated were analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequency counts, mean scores, standard deviation, and bar charts, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation

was employed as inferential statistics. The hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

Level of University Effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria

In analyzing the question, scores relating to university effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria were computed. Frequency counts and percentages were used to illustrate the responses to items 1- 40 in Section B of “University Effectiveness Questionnaire (UEQ)”. In order to determine the levels of university effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria (low, moderate and high), percentile distribution formula was used. Respondents who scored 33.3 percent (53.28) of the total score on university effectiveness and below were categorized into ‘low’ level of university effectiveness while those who scored 66.6 percent (106.56) of total score and above on “University Effectiveness Questionnaire (UEQ)” were categorized into ‘high’ level of university effectiveness. Scores between the low and high University effectiveness groups were categorized into ‘moderate’ level of university effectiveness. Therefore, the low level of university effectiveness starts from 40.0 to 52.28; the moderate level of university effectiveness starts from 52.29 to 106.55 and the high level of university effectiveness is from 106.56 to 160.00. The level of university effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Level of university effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria

| Level of University Effectiveness | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| Low (40.00-52.28) | 75 | 20.8 |
| Moderate (53.29-106.55) | 152 | 42.2 |
| High (106.56-160.00) | 133 | 36.9 |
| Total | 360 | 100.0 |

Table 1 showed the effectiveness of universities in Southwest Nigeria. According to the findings, 75 out of 360 academic staff members (or 20.8 percent) reported a low degree of university effectiveness. Those with a moderate level of university effectiveness were 152, or 42.2 percent, while those with a high level of university effectiveness were 133, or 36.9%. This indicates that university effectiveness was moderate in Southwest Nigeria. The level of university effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria is further depicted Figure 1.

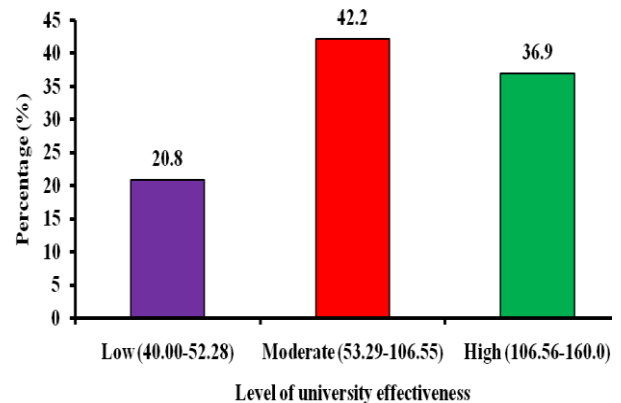


Figure i: Level of the level of university effectyiveness in Southwest, Nigeria

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between leadership decisiveness and universities effectiveness.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores relating to leadership decisiveness was computed using items 1-6 in Section B of “Leadership Trait Questionnaire

(LTQ) while the University Effectiveness was obtained using items 1- 40 in Section B of “University Effectiveness (UEQ)”. These sets of scores were subsequently subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Leadership Decisiveness and Universities Effectiveness

| Variables | N | \bar{x} | SD | rcal | Pvalue |
|----------------------------|---|-----------|------|--------|--------|
| Leadership decisiveness | 6 | 13.67 | 5.11 | 0.825* | 0.043 |
| Universities effectiveness | | 95.31 | 1.45 | | |

***p<0.05**

Table 2 showed that the computed r-value (0.825) is significant at p<0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between leadership decisiveness and universities effectiveness. The relationship between leadership decisiveness and universities effectiveness is high and statistically significant in a positive direction.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between leadership judgment and universities effectiveness.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores relating to leadership judgment was computed using items 7-11 in Section B of “Leadership Trait Questionnaire” (LTQ)” while universities effectiveness was obtained using items 1- 40 in Section B of “University Effectiveness Questionnaire (UEQ)”. Following that, these sets of scores were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at a significance level of 0.05. Table 3 summarises the outcome.

Table 3: Leadership Judgment and Universities Effectiveness

| Variables | N | \bar{x} | SD | rcal | Pvalue |
|----------------------------|---|-----------|------|--------|--------|
| Leadership judgment | 6 | 13.84 | 3.11 | 0.846* | 0.034 |
| Universities effectiveness | | 95.31 | 1.45 | | |

***p<0.05**

Table 3 showed that computed r-value of 0.846 is significant at p<0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. It can thus be said that there is a significant relationship between leadership judgment and universities effectiveness. The correlation between leadership judgment and universities effectiveness is high and statistically significant in a positive direction.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between leadership loyalty and universities effectiveness.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores relating to leadership loyalty was computed using items 12-16 in Section B of “Leadership Traits Questionnaire (LTQ)” while universities effectiveness was obtained using items 1- 40 in Section B of “University

Effectiveness Questionnaire (UEQ)”. These sets of scores were subsequently subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Leadership Loyalty and Universities Effectiveness

| Variables | N | \bar{x} | SD | r _{cal} | Pvalue |
|----------------------------|---|-----------|------|------------------|--------|
| Leadership loyalty | 6 | 13.62 | 2.59 | 0.820* | 0.45 |
| Universities effectiveness | | 95.31 | 1.45 | | |

*p<0.05

Table 4 shows that the computed r-value (0.820) is significant at p<0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between leadership loyalty and universities effectiveness. The correlation between leadership loyalty and universities effectiveness is high and statistically significant in a positive direction.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the level of university effectiveness in Southwest, Nigeria was moderate. It implies that university effectiveness in terms of: quality graduates, academic calendar, proper funding, research, community services, globalization, sporting activities, and students support services is given priority attention. What could be responsible for this finding might be the fact that both government and other stakeholders are making concerted efforts to ensure that effectiveness in the universities is prioritized for better output.

The study showed that there was significant relationship between leadership decisiveness and universities effectiveness. This by implication means that if university leadership is able to make sound, well-informed and timely decisions, effectiveness in the system will be enhanced. The finding could be as a result of the fact that university management has realized that delay in making good decision by the university leadership may impair cordial relationship with the subordinates, which may in turn lead to low job performance and ineffectiveness in the system. The finding supports the research work of Ferrari & Dovidio (2001) which revealed that managerial effectiveness is related to prompt decision making.

The finding also showed that there was significant relationship between leadership judgment and universities effectiveness. This means that leadership judgment contributes to university effectiveness. It equally means that for any better effectiveness in university system to be achieved, leadership judgment is of great importance. This finding may result from the fact that ability of the leader to think about things clearly, calmly, and in an orderly fashion in order to make good decisions relating to academic matters may consequently affect university effectiveness. The finding supports the research works of Dane & Pratt (2007), Tichy & Bennis (2007) that good leadership judgment is related to

well-informed decisions and desirable organizational outcomes.

The study also revealed that there was significant relationship between leadership loyalty and universities effectiveness. It implies that leadership loyalty has great influence on universities effectiveness. To this end it is certain that if leadership is faithful to commitment or obligations, it will enhance effectiveness in the university system. The finding supports the research work of Guillon and Cezanne (2014), Porter et al (2004) who submitted a robust positive link between employee loyalty and organizational performance. They also found that loyalty in terms of commitment strengthens individual’s involvement in a particular organization.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that leadership traits was good and the university were effective. Leadership trait variables such as decisiveness, judgment and loyalty were important factors that influenced universities effectiveness in Southwest Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Administration of universities should improve on the existing level of university effectiveness in terms of quality graduates, stable academic calendar, adequate funding, research, community services, globalization, sporting activities and student support services.
2. Management of universities should endeavor to build good leadership traits in its management staff by exposing them to regular leadership and management seminars and conferences for efficient and effective management towards enhancing the level of university effectiveness.
3. There is need to embrace good and sound judgment by university leaders for enhanced university effectiveness.

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