

Full Length Research Paper

Rationale for students' participation in university governance and organizational effectiveness in Ekiti and Ondo States, Nigeria

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Accepted 4 January, 2012

The study investigated the rationale for students' participation in university governance and organizational effectiveness. A descriptive research of survey design was adopted. The population consisted of all staff and students of Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State and Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State. 700 subjects were selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. A validated questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on the Rationale for Students' Participation in University Governance and Organizational Effectiveness (RSPUG) with a reliability coefficient of 0.93 was administered on the subjects. The data collected were analyzed descriptively. Simple percentage was employed to answer the research question, while the research hypothesis was tested using Pearson product moment correlation technique. Rationale for students' participation in university governance was identified. A significant relationship was established between organizational effectiveness and the rationale for students' participation in university governance. The study recommended students' representation on all university statutory committees, senate and council committees inclusive.

Key words: Students' participation, university governance, organizational effectiveness, rationale for participation, student union government, relationship.

INTRODUCTION

The rationale for students' participation in institutional governance was viewed by Kamperin cited in Jorgen (2010), as when students feel responsible for their own learning through the facilitation of their teachers. In other words, teachers and students collaborate to improve their education and hence its quality. Adesanoye (2000) wrote that students' participation in institutional governance was dated back to the early 19th century. He further wrote that, Bell introduced the method of drilling older children who later taught the young ones and that, by this multiplicative effect, the effort of a single teacher could be increased many folds when older ones are placed in position of trust and responsibility. Adegun (2003) while citing Swift gave at least four manifest functions of

education in our society, one of which includes social solidarity by developing in children a sense of belonging to the society. Adesanoye (2000), while citing Douglas, opined that the rationale for students' participation include among others, the development of ideas of right conduct, self control, co-operative and provision of training in leadership.

The findings of the previous researchers and other literature reviewed have however shown that, university governance is a team work and that issue of organizational effectiveness should not be seen as problem of the Vice-Chancellor or the Principal Officers only. Hence in the management of higher institutions, committees play very important roles in the decision making process. This is because as democratic establishment, universities' decisions must reflect the opinion of a cross section of the staff and students if such decisions are to be acceptable to all. This view point was

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supported by Nwaokolo (1998) and Longing (2002). The effective use of the committee system requires that the right persons should be used, while the choice of the right persons depends on their skills, ability and positions in the organization according to Ajayi and Ayodele (2002). In one of his ten proposed principles towards keeping a university governance system healthy, Gerland (2004) said, people who will be affected by a major decision have the right to be heard. Students may resent those decisions to which they are not party to, and in an attempt by the university management to enforce such decisions, crisis situation may result thereby causing disruption in the academic calendar. The quality of leadership in a tertiary institution, its mission and vision, effectiveness and efficiency, inevitably influences the standard of productivity by staff, and the achievement of students (Akindutire, 2004). On this premise, it depends on how effective and efficient the leadership in the university system is, in ensuring that membership of committees are well constituted for effective governance of the system.

As a governing body according to Ezekwem (2009), the Student Union Government provides the student – body with activities and a forum to discuss school issues and plays a leading role with clubs and organizations within and outside the university system. Its major function also includes representing the entire student body and ensuring that their voices are heard and reflected in all levels of university decision making process. It is worth noting that, education in the form of students' participation embodies the pedagogical principles of learning by doing, of independent experience, and of verifying in practice what one is learning.

It seems the student union government makes the process of democratic representation and participation in the faculty and the university decision making bodies easier. By implication, the student union government and other associations on universities' campuses contribute positively to the effective governance of the university system. It is against the foregoing background information that this study was embarked upon to investigate the relationship between the rationale for students' participation in university governance and organizational effectiveness within the system.

Statement of the problem

It is a common knowledge that for over a decade now, the Nigerian universities no longer have a unified academic calendar as it use to be. This has not been unconnected with the incessant closure of the Nigerian University system due to either labour union strikes or the frequent students' union protest. This has, in recent years become topical in public discourse, among educationists and the Nigerian press, both print and electronic media. This situation has been producing half- baked and unemployable graduates according to Oto (2006), who

further asserted that, the frequent strike actions and indiscriminate closure of institutions aid examinations malpractice. According to him, when institutions are closed, semester and course work are condensed and students become panicky and start to explore "all means" to pass their examination. There are observed decline in productivity in the university system as outputs (students) are kept static while inputs (human and material resources) increase. There are observed wastages in terms of time and cost, on the part of the students and the government who spends 5 or more years' budgetary allocations on a 4 year programme.

In order to provide solutions to these problems, the study therefore investigated the rationale for students' participation in university governance and its relationship with organizational effectiveness in the university system. Therefore, the following research question was raised and hypothesis was generated to find solution to the problem of the study.

Research question

What is the rationale for students' participation in university governance?

Research hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between organizational effectiveness and the rationale for students' participation in university governance.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research design used was descriptive survey type. The population for the study consisted of all staff and students of the Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State and Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State. 700 subjects, consisting of 50 students' union executive members, 200 students, 50 non teaching staff and 50 teaching staff from each of the two universities covered by the study were used as samples. Stratified random and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the samples. The population was divided into strata based on the groups within the university, while simple random sampling technique was used to select the samples from each stratum.

The instrument used to collect data was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on the rationale for students' participation in university governance and organizational effectiveness (RSPUG)". The face and content validities of the instrument were ascertained by experts in test and measurement and educational management. The reliability of the instrument was tested using the split-half method. A reliability coefficient of 0.90 was obtained using the Pearson product moment correlation technique. The split-half coefficient was corrected to full-length coefficient of 0.93 using the Spearman Brown prophecy formula the data obtained from the instrument were analyzed descriptively using simple percentages. The research hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson product moment correlation technique.

Table 1. Rationale for students' participation in university governance.

S/N	Rationale for students' participation in university governance	Agree		Disagree		Indifferent	
		F	%	f	%	f	%
1	Students are more committed when they participate in university governance	503	71.8	176	25.1	21	3
2	University management is more efficient and effective when students are involved in decision making process.	522	74.6	151	21.5	27	3.9
3	Set objectives are achieved easily when students are part of the university governance	475	67.8	208	29.7	17	2.5
4	Most of the problems that usually lead to students' unrest become easily resolved through dialogue when students are part of the decision making process.	553	79.0	142	20.0	7	1.0
5	Perennial closure of the university system due to students' crises become things of the past	483	69.0	202	28.9	15	2.1
6	Policy formulation and implementation becomes easier	491	70.1	192	27.4	17	2.4
7	There would be stable economic gain in terms of business operations or opportunities on campuses, cities, towns or communities where universities are sited	453	64.7	225	32.1	22	3.1
8	It allows for development of leadership and assumptions of responsibility of self-government	404	57.7	268	38.3	28	4.0
9	Cost is saved in terms of keeping students in school and running of the University system when academic calendars are stable,	365	52.1	320	45.7	15	2.1
10	Reduction of crime/antisocial behaviours on campus as students become committed and focused.	417	59.6	268	38.3	15	2.1
Average total		66.64		-		-	

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research question 1:

What is the rationale for students' participation in university governance?

The findings in respect of this question are presented in Table 1. Table 1 shows that 503 subjects that is (71.8%) of the sample viewed higher commitment as a rationale for students' participation in university governance; responses on item 2 revealed that 522 subjects i.e (74.6%) adjudged that students' participation in university governance will enhance efficiency and effectiveness of university governance, 67.8% of the subjects viewed students' participation in university governance as a means of achieving set objectives. Problems leading to students' unrest are easily resolved when students participate in university governance scored 79%; frequent closure of the university becomes things of the past was 69%; policy formulation and implementation becomes

easier was 70.1%; stable economic gains was 64.7%; development of leadership and assumption of responsibility was 57.7%; saved cost in terms of running the university was 52.1% while reduction in crime/antisocial behavior was 59.6%.

From the responses on items 1 to 10 in Table 1, it can be seen that on the average over 66% agreed to the identified rationale for students' participation in university governance.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between the rationale for students' participation in university governance and organizational effectiveness. The null hypothesis was not accepted since r-cal value of 0.357 is greater than r-table value of 0.195. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between organizational effectiveness and rationale for students' participation in university governance

Table 2. Pearson correlation analysis on relationship between organizational effectiveness and the rationale for students' participation in university governance.

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	r-cal	r-tab
Rationale for students' participation	700	38.27	5.24	0.357*	0.195*
Organizational effectiveness	700	72.73	10.16		

P* < 0.05.

(Table 2).

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that the rationale for students' participation in university governance among others include, higher degree of level of commitment on the part of the students, easy attainment of set goals or objectives, efficient policy formulation and implementation, uninterrupted flow of academic programmes, leadership training and development, stable economic gain and reduction in crime/antisocial behaviours on the part of the students. These findings are in line with Adegun (2003), who gave at least four manifest functions of education in our society. One of which includes, social solidarity by developing in children a sense of belonging to the society. The findings also corroborate Adesanoye (2000) who, while citing Douglas submitted that, the rationale for students' participation include among others, the development of ideas of right conduct, self control, co-operative and fairness, provision of training in leadership and development of a sense and appreciation of individual responsibility for the welfare of all group interest.

The study also established a significant relationship between organizational effectiveness and the rationale for students' participation in university governance. This finding was supported by the view of Kamperin cited in Jonden (2010) who rightly observed that students feel responsible for their own learning through the facilitation in collaborating activities, meaning that teachers and students collaborate to improve their education and hence its quality. The finding also supports the pedagogical principle of learning by doing, of independent experience, and of verifying in practice what one is learning.

Conclusion

The identified rationales for students' participation in university governance in this study are desirable, as this would enhance students' commitment and performance.

The significant relationship established between organizational effectiveness, and the rationale for students' participation in university governance was an indication that, most of the problems leading to students' unrest could be resolved if students are allowed their rightful place in university governance. This implies that organizational effectiveness could be increased to a high level with increase in level of students' participation in university governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the significant relationship established between organizational effectiveness, and the rationale for students' participation in university governance, the level of students' participation in university governance could be increased by allowing representatives of the students' union government to serve as members in all university statutory committees, senate and council committees inclusive. An upward review of the number of students' representatives on each committee was also recommended to make students' contributions at committee meetings significant. Management is encouraged to ensure that students' contribution at meetings count in decision – making process.

University leadership could as well organize and sponsor courses, seminars and workshop on leadership training regularly for students' leaders to assist them perform their challenging roles. By so doing, university management will enjoy peace on campus while the problem of unstable academic calendar in Nigerian Universities would become history.

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