Research Culture and Effective University Management in South-South Zone of Nigeria

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Abstract
Concerns about the quality of research and effectiveness of the university system in terms of goal attainment of higher education institutions in Nigeria abound. This paper aimed at determining the extent to which the prevailing research culture in universities influences the effective management of the university system. Ex-post facto design was adopted. A total of one thousand and forty seven academic staff drawn from a population of 3478 lecturers in four universities in the South-South Zone of Nigeria responded to the survey questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Fishers LSD multiple comparisons was used to analyze the data. The result indicated that a significant influence exist of research culture on effective management of university system in terms of goal attainment and management of staff, and a no significant influence of research culture on effective management of university system in terms of management of facilities and management of students. It was therefore concluded that research culture exert a partial influence on effective management of the university system. From this conclusion, a number of recommendations were made.
Key words: research culture, effective management, university system, goal attainment, management of facilities, management of staff, management of students.

Introduction
The need to have an effective educational system cannot be overstressed especially in a developing nation like Nigeria with the enormous challenge of growing a literate population in this globally networked world. Research is one of the trifocal responsibilities of university education. It is so critical that it determines the quality of any higher institution. It is a mandatory requirement for graduation of students at first degree, Masters degree and Ph.D. It also constitutes a key criterion for the promotion of academic staff and as such requires high level participation and quality work (Akuegwu, Udida and Bassey, 2006). So research remains a pivotal point in university education. Indeed, it is among the six objective indicators for ranking world universities. They are: number of highly cited researches, number of articles published in nature and science, number of articles indexed in science citation index and in social sciences index (Obanya, 2010). The above scenario goes to show the crucial importance of research and publication in the university system.

Unfortunately, while universities in the developed countries have a firm tradition of research, not much research is carried out in developing countries. For instance, despite the efforts made by the Philippine Commission on Higher Education to ensure a stronger research orientation among higher education institutions, the current state of higher education in the Philippines leaves much to be desired, in terms of quantity, quality, thrusts, and contribution to national development (Salazar-Clemena, 2006). Nigeria is not an exemption in this, especially in terms of quality. Nigeria's number of scientific publications for 1995 was seven hundred and eleven – significantly less than its output of 1,062 scientific publication in 1981 by a comparatively much smaller university system then (Taskforce, 2000). In contrast, scientific publications were 3,413 for South Africa, 14,883 for India, 310 for Indonesia, and 5,440 for Brazil (Task Force, 2002). The country's low research output probably reflects the low priority accorded to research and development by government decision-makers. For example Nigeria's federal university system spends only 1.3 percent of its budget on research (Hartnett, 2003). Available data indicate low levels of investment in research capacity and education and help to explain why the country's non-oil economy has remained consistently sluggish during a decade of research articles published in prestigious international academic journals and the number of citations in scholarly indexes. It found that only 20 universities scored between 10 and 200 scores in their research output (World Education News and Review 2006). This shows that out of over the 120 universities in the Nigeria only 20 were found to have performed better with regard to their research output. This is worrisome because the majority of the universities were found wanting in this regard. Even at the world level, no Nigerian university ranked among the first five thousand in terms of research productivity in the latest ranking of world universities in January 2007. The only Nigerian university that came close to this rank was university of Ilorin

which took the 5,846[th] position (Enserink, 2007; and internet lab, 2007). The importance of research to the effectiveness of a university system as well as its achievement is strongly recognized by most universities. A study by Akwegwu, Udida & Udey (2007) examined the relationship between academic staff research ability and the effectiveness of university system in South-South Zone of Nigeria. They recommended that academic staff in universities should be encouraged to carry out more research work. But, sadly, what goes on in some of our universities especially at the undergraduate level could best be described as 'armchair research'. It is a regular feature to see posters on notice boards which read:

> **"Having problem writing your project, data analysis, choosing project topic, proposals, term paper, book review, seminar and others? Then it is over as you call Research Expert on Tel Nos………"**

Also project and thesis supervision are very poor at all levels from undergraduate to post-graduate levels. The result according to Bisong (2011) is the certification of half-baked, barely literate persons as Masters and doctoral degree holders. It is against this background that this study sought to find out whether the prevailing research culture as described above, has any influence on effective management of the university system in terms of goal attainment, management of staff, students and facilities.

The problem

Serious concerns are being raised about the paucity of research in Nigerian higher education institutions especially the declining quality of post graduate education. One area where the quality slide is most evident is in the research capability and output of both staff and students, more particularly in the quality of thesis/dissertation. It was in this regard that Bisong (2011) in his presentation at the graduate school retreat held at the University of Calabar, pointed out in very strong terms that, "the danger of producing mediocre or perhaps total fools as graduates looms very high if not reversed." Also concerned about the quality of research in the universities the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, declared that the Federal government would soon establish a special mechanism to rate each university in the country based on the quality of their graduates and research output. While reacting to President Goodluck Jonathan's disclosure, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Abuja, Prof Adelabi blamed poor scores in international rating of Nigeria university records to little attention to research by the university authorities (Okoye, 2011). This implies that research which expectedly should take a central stage as a strong practiced culture is yet to be given the serious attention it deserves. One wonders why this is so, prompting the question, to what extent does the prevailing research culture influence effective university management? To guide the study one hypothesis was used: There is no significant influence of research culture on effective management of the university system in terms of goal attainment, management of facilities, management of staff and management of students.

Methodology

This study was conducted in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This zone has six states and is rich in mineral resources, especially oil which accounts for over ninety percent of Nigeria's income. There are 12 public universities located in this zone, made up of 5 federal and 7 state universities. However, the focus of this study is on federal-owned universities located in the zone. Ex-post factor design was adopted for this study. The population comprised of 5631 lecturers, while the sample consisted of 1047 lecturers, drawn using stratified random sampling technique. Further breakdown of the sample indicated that it represented 18.60 percent of the population. The researchers' developed and validated instrument called Research Culture and Effective University System Management Questionnaire (RCEUSMQ) was used for data collection. The instrument had 2 sections A and B. Section A contained 6 demographic variables. Section B had 40 items arranged on 4-point Likert scale , 8 of which measured each of the following variables: research culture, goal attainment, management of facilities, management of staff and management of students. The trial test yielded a reliability coefficient estimate of 0.76 to 0.88, figures which confirmed that the instrument was reliable for use in achieving the objectives of this study. Administration of the instrument was undertaken personally by the researchers and with the aid of research assistants, a measure which ensured that a 95 percent returns rate was achieved. Descriptive statistics, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and its associated fishers LSD multiple comparison test were used to analyze data generated for this study.

Analysis of results
Hypothesis
There is no significant influence of research culture on effective management of the University system in terms of goal attainment, management of facilities, management of staff and management of students. The independent variable is research culture while the dependent variable is effective management of the University system in terms

of goal attainment, management of facilities, management of staff and management of students. The research culture was categorized into low, average and high based on the lecturers' mean response score. Lecturers who scored below the mean in their response were categorized as low, those who scored within the mean region were categorized as average and those who scored above the mean level were categorized as assessing research culture as high. Based on this, the influence of research culture on effective management of the University system in terms of goal attainment, management of facilities, management of staff and management of students was computed using the One Way Analysis Of Variance. The results of the analysis are displayed in tables 1 and 2.

TABLE 1
A summary of the descriptive statistics of influence of research culture on effective management of the university system

Effective management of the university system	Research Culture	N	$\overline{X}$		SD		
GOATTTOT	Low		384	25.07		4.78	
	Average	290	24.07			5.18	
	High		373	24.49		5.16	
	Total		1047	24.59		5.03	
FACMNTOT	Low		384	24.40		3.81	
	Average	290	24.54			4.04	
	High		373	24.19		4.33	
	Total		1047	24.36		4.06	
STFMATO	Low		384	25.13		3.46	
	Average	290	25.41			3.29	
	High		373	24.72		3.68	
	Total		1047	25.06		3.51	
STMNGTOT	Low		384	25.12			3.94
	Average	290	25.33				3.58
	High		373	25.02		3.81	
	Total		1047	25.14		3.79	

Observation of Table 1 shows that for effective management of the University system in terms of goal attainment, lecturers who perceived the influence of research culture as low had the highest mean score ($\overline{X}_h$=25.07) followed by those who perceived it as high ($\overline{X}_h$=24.49) and lastly by those who perceived it as average ($\overline{X}_{av}$=24.07). With regards to effective management of the University system in terms of facilities management lecturers who perceived research culture as average had a higher mean score ($\overline{X}_{av}$=24.54) followed by those who perceived it as low ($\overline{X}_L$=24.40) and lastly by those who perceived it as high ($\overline{X}_h$=24.18). With regards to effective management of the University system lecturers who perceived the research culture as average had the highest mean score ($\overline{X}_{av}$=25.41) followed by those who perceived it as low ($\overline{X}_L$=25.13) and lastly by those who perceived it as high ($\overline{X}_h$=24.72). With regards to effective management of the university system in terms of student management, lecturers who perceived research culture as average had the highest mean score ($\overline{X}_{av}$=25.33), followed by those who perceived it as low ($\overline{X}_L$=25.12) lastly by those who perceived it as high ($\overline{X}_h$=25.02).The One Way Analysis Of Variance of influence of research culture on effective management of the University system was done. The result of the analysis is displayed in Table 2. The result shows that there is no significant influence of research culture on effective management of the University system in terms of management of facilities (F=.651,P<.05), and management of students (F=.573,P<.05).

The null hypothesis for these two cases was retained and the alternate hypothesis was rejected because the calculated F-ratios of .651 and .573 were found to be far less than the critical F-ratio of 3.00 given .05 alpha levels and with 2 and 1044 degrees of freedom. This finding implies that lecturers perceived research culture as not having any influence on effective management of the University system in terms of management of facilities and management of students.

Table 2

One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of influence of research culture on effective management of the university system

Effective management of the University system	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	X^2	F	Sig.
GOATTTOT	Between Groups	168.030	2	84.015	3.322*	.036
	Within Groups	26400.069	1044	25.287		
	Total	26568.099	1046			
FACMNTOT	Between Groups	21.529	2	10.764	.651	.522
	Within Groups	17252.278	1044	16.525		
	Total	17273.807	1046			
STFMATOT	Between Groups	80.303	2	40.152	3.281*	.038
	Within Groups	12774.661	1044	12.236		G
	Total	12854.965	1046			
STMNGTOT	Between Groups	16.510	2	8.255	.573	.564
	Within Groups	15041.851	1044	14.408		
	Total	15058.361	1046			

* Significant at .05; $F_{2, 1044}=3.00$

Further observation of Table 2 shows that there is a significant influence of research culture on effective management with respect to goal attainment (F=3.322, P<.05), and management of staff (F=3.281,P<.05). The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis retained because the calculated F ratio of 3.322 and 3.281 were found to be greater than the critical F ratios of 3.00 given .05 and with 2 and 1044 degrees of freedom. Given the significant F-ratios a post hoc analysis using the Fishers Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison test analysis was done. The result of the analysis is displayed in table 3.

Table 3

Fishers LSD multiple comparisons test analysis of influence of research culture on effective management of university system

Effective Management of the University System	Research Culture	Low (n=384)	Average (n=290)	High (n=373)	
Goal attainment	Low	25.07[a].	99[b]	.57	
	Average	2.54[c]	24.07	-.42	
	High	1.57	-1.06	24.49	
Msw=25.287					
Management of Staff	Low	25.13[a]	-.28[b]	.41	
	Average	-1.4[c]	25.41	.69	
	High	1.64	2.52	24.72	
Msw=12.23					

*significant at .05

a. Group means are placed on the diagonal

b. Differences between group means are placed above the diagonal

C. Fishers LSD t-value are place below the diagonal*significant at .05

The result presented in Table 3 shows that with regards to the influence of research culture on effective management of the University system in terms of goal attainment, lecturers who perceived the research culture as low had a significant higher mean score for goal attainment than those who perceived it as average (t=2.54). Other pair wise comparison between low and high (t=1.57) and between high and average (-1.06) were found to be insignificant. These results mean that lecturers who perceived the research culture as low assessed the University system as being effectively managed in terms of goal attainment than those who perceived it as average. With regards to effective management of the University system in terms of management of staff, lecturers who perceived research culture as average had a significant higher mean score than those who perceived it as high (t=2.52). Other pair wise comparison between low and high (t=1.61) and between low and average (t=-1.03) were found to be insignificant. This finding implies that lecturers who perceived the research culture as average assessed the University system as being effectively managed in terms of management of staff than those who perceived it as average.

Discussion of results

The analysis of this hypothesis produced mixed result, that is, significant and no significant influence. On one hand, the result revealed that a significant influence exist of research culture on effective university management in terms of goal attainment and management of staff. Based on this result, the null hypothesis at these dimensions was rejected. On the other hand, the result indicated that no significant influence exist of research culture on effective university management in terms of management of facilities and management of students.

From the perspective of the influence of research culture on effective university system in terms of goal attainment and management of staff, this finding by implication, means that research culture play a significant role in the university goal attainment, as well as the management of staff. That is, research culture is a bulwark, in which goal attainment and management of staff rests. This finding is not surprising. This is so because research is one of the principal functions of the university, and as such the strength of research activities or the popularity of research activities shores up university reputation. Since, research is one the pivot on which university education stands; its culture is important in the determination of the attainment of the goals of university existence.

On the part of management of staff, the relevance attached to research also influences the management of staff, where research culture is favourable to staff, their management is likely to produce a positive result and vice versa, where the reverse is the case. The interest attached to research culture stems from the fact that research constitutes one of the determinants if not the major one, of staff promotion. So, where the culture stimulates motivation and quality output of research activities, the management of staff is likely to yield tremendous result to the university system.

This outcome is supported by the findings of Ayee (2005) which showed that universities recruit and retain researchers of the highest distinction and potential to enhance its effectiveness. Due to the importance attached to research culture, universities invest so much in it to attain their goals as well as apply its findings in management of staff. With regards to the influence of research culture on the effective university management in terms of management of facilities and management of students, a no significant result was obtained. This means that research culture has little to do with the effective management of university system with regards to management of facilities and management of students on the whole, this finding defies rationality. Ordinarily, one would have expected a significant result, because research culture in the universities cannot be sustained without effective management of facilities. However , this finding is a clear indication that research culture can be maintained and effectively carried out where there are no facilities, so is management of students. It therefore follows that research culture prevailing in a university system does not affect how their students and facilities are managed.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn. Research culture exert a partial influence on the effective management of the university system judging from a significant influence reported on goal attainment and management of staff, and no significant influence reported on management of facilities and management of students. This therefore, follows that research culture do not have a hundred percent positive influence on effective management of the university system in South-South Nigeria.

Recommendations
1. Research activities should be accorded a top priority in the scheme of affairs in the universities. Apart from research being one of the tripartite functions of the universities, it helps in breaking new frontiers in the

quest for knowledge acquisition and dissemination. This will enable the universities live up to the expectation of producing high level manpower as well as ensure effective management of university system.

2. The government at the federal level and internal managers of the universities should place high premium on the findings of research. As such, lecturers should be encouraged through funding to embark on research activities regularly. This will not only help them, to keep abreast with the new and latest techniques and skills in their various areas of expertise, but also enable them discharge their responsibilities creditably. This will prove in no small measure as a veritable tool in the effective management of university system.

3. The university administration should invest massively on research by commissioning their lecturers to focus on research bothering on effective management of university system. The findings from such research can serve as a tonic for ensuring that effective management of universities is sustained at all times. Akin to this is that the findings will have the tendency of equipping the authorities with result oriented management skills that promotes the survival of the university education.

4. Facilities should be provided in universities to give research activities a pride of place. Where there are facilities, especially in the science and technology areas, research in these fields of study will not suffer terrible setbacks as is the case presently in the universities studied. Provision of facilities will not only boost research activities, but will also place the universities on sound footing to contribute immensely towards national development.

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