

Politics and the Appointment of Council Members, Vice Chancellors and other Principal Officers in Federal and State Universities in the North Central States of Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated staff perception of the influence of political factors on the appointment of members of governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers in federal and state universities in the north central states of Nigeria. Specially, the study examined the influence of political factors of partisan politics, ethnic and sectional considerations, religious affiliation, favouritism, the quota system and catchment area policy on the appointment of members of governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers in federal and state universities. Two research questions and hypotheses respectively guided the study. The review of related literature which was done under the conceptual/theoretical framework identified the influence of political factors on the appointment of members of governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers in federal and state universities. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study was ten (10) universities made up of five federal and five state universities. The population of the respondents consisted of 11,582 made up of 7,971 staff of federal universities and 3,611 staff of state universities. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select 1,120 sample respondents made up of 767 staff of federal universities and 353 staff of state universities for the study. A 14-item structured questionnaire titled "Influence of politics on appointment Questionnaire (IPAG) was used to collect data for the study. A reliability estimate of 0.72 was established for the instrument. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the t-test analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The major findings of the study showed that partisan politics, ethnic and sectional considerations, religious affiliation, favouritism, the quota system and catchment area policy significantly influenced appointment of members of governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers in federal and state universities in the North central states of Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended that a congregation committee (CC) and senate search committee (SSC) made up of impeccable characters be established in each university to screen prospective members of governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers before their appointment so as to minimize the influence of politics on appointment in federal and state universities in the North Central states of Nigeria.

Keywords: Politics, Appointment of Council Members, Influence

Introduction

Education may be defined as a process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools, colleges or universities, to improve knowledge and develop skills. In the modern society, education is no longer seen solely as a set of skills, attitudes and values but as a service or a product to be sold by academic institutions that have transformed themselves into service providers (Misha, 2008). Consequently, educational institutions have to be effectively and efficiently managed. The art of good governance in higher institutions, particularly in federal and state universities, therefore calls for the effective balancing and manipulation of the internal and external political factors that tend to influence their management. Politics and education are therefore closely interconnected and this can be seen in the management of education. Denga (1999:37) consented to this statement when he said "no one can take education out of politics neither can anyone take politics out of education". In North Central Nigeria, education is regarded as an instrument for social, economic, technical and political development. This perhaps explains why educational agencies, institutions, communities and individuals in the area to a large extent, influence the management of educational institutions.

Politics is a struggle over values, power and scarce resources in which the aim of the conflicting interests are to gain the desired values and resources at the expense of other rivals. Politics and education are interrelated. Education is an offshoot of the political system. This explains why education is influenced by political considerations. When political factors such as ethnicity, sectionalism, religion, partisanship, catchment area, quota system and favouritism influence the appointment of council members, vice chancellors and other principal officers of universities, morale of staff and students is dampened, mediocrity is enthroned and productivity is affected. The North Central Zone of Nigeria is multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-linguistic, thereby making universities in the area more vulnerable to political manipulations and influence.

The stakeholders of education in the area have expressed serious concerns over the likely influence of political factors on appointment in the universities with adverse consequences for standard and productivity. The purpose of this study therefore was to determine the influence of politics on the appointment of council members, vice chancellors and other principal officers in federal and state universities in the North Central States of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out the extent to which political factors influenced the appointment of governing council members, vice chancellors and other principal officers in federal and state universities in the North Central States of Nigeria.

Every day, managers of federal and state universities are confronted with personnel issues and problems which demand that they make and take decisions. As resources are generally scarce to satisfy the competing needs of their institutions and various interests, educational managers are bound to make choices from available alternatives. Their choices could however be influenced by many political factors from within or outside the institutions that could have implications for appointment of Council members, vice chancellors and other principal officers of universities. Whether from within or from outside, managers of these universities take decisions that discriminate against certain alternatives. Such discriminations or preferences may be borne out of political considerations. Political factors such as ethnicity, partisan political consideration, sectionalism, tribalism, religion, favouritism, catchment area, and quota system, may influence the appointment of external and internal members of the governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers. They may have implications for the effectiveness of the university system.

The appointment of external members of the governing councils of federal and state universities is assumed to have political undertones. It is speculated that the visitors use their authority and influence to appoint people of their religious, ethnic or sectional and partisan political background to the councils of the universities. This has become more apparent when considering the fact that in Nigeria, the state bears much responsibility for governance and financing of public higher institutions. Debates concerning the degree to which public universities should be insulated from external political partisan influence, in terms of the appointment of external members of governing councils, have therefore continued to grow day by day in the North Central States of Nigeria. Indeed, some observers believe that the alleged politicization of the management of federal and state universities have caused the authorities of these universities to take directives from politicians.

Schmidt (2001) observed that governors often handpick board members to bring the college campus under partisan control. Corroborating this, Dunn (2003) and McLendon (2003) pointed out that governors more often than not lead the way in shaping the general fiscal policies that influence higher education and also appoint members of governing councils and boards which place them in commanding positions to influence the management of higher institutions. This raises the concern of the sort of exact balance that exists between politicians and the authorities of public universities in terms of their management.

It is also alleged that the appointment of vice chancellors and other principal officers of federal and state universities is ethnically, religiously or sectionally influenced. The politics associated with the appointment of vice chancellors and other principal officers of the universities could be punctuated by rancour, bitter infighting and at times open confrontation which could have serious consequences for the effective management of the university system. Ethnicity, religion, sectionalism and quota system could be brought into play depending on the ethnic, religious, sectional or ideological composition of the council and senate. As Knott and Payne (2001) observed, state governors or visitors may be concerned with appointing qualified heads of higher institutions, the power of appointment is the subject of occasional abuse by visitors or governors who choose to play politics with higher education. The implication of this for personnel management in federal and state universities, is the likelihood of vice chancellors and other principal officers appointed or elected on the basis of ethnic loyalty and sectional politicking, showing bias in favour of those from their ethnic, religious or sectional background who may have helped them to power and by so doing, may contribute to the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of their universities

In North Central States of Nigeria, the desire to bridge the yawning educational gap between it and the Southern geo- political zones, and also to eradicate poverty, ignorance, diseases and achieve socio-economic and political development, has intensified educational activities in the area. This perhaps explains why the states in the area, are competing to establish universities so as to provide equal educational opportunities to the people. Similarly, individuals, communities and local governments are desirous of benefiting from the advantages that university education offers within its locality while the staff and students of universities also want to participate effectively and meaningfully in the management process of their institutions in order to improve their welfare. North Central Nigeria is multi - cultural, multi - religious, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic, thereby making personnel matters in the universities vulnerable to political manipulations and influence.

Therefore, the desire to acquire university education in order to improve the socio-economic, political and technological development of individuals, communities, local governments and states, has become exceedingly competitive and political in the area. This then explains the various concerns that the relevant stakeholders have expressed over the likely influence of political factors on the appointment of members of

governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers in federal and state universities in North Central States of Nigeria.

The concerns expressed by the stakeholders appear to be speculations that ought to be authenticated. The justification for this study was therefore based on the serious concerns expressed by the relevant stakeholders of federal and state universities of the likely influence of politics on the appointment of members of governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers with serious consequences for standard and productivity in the universities in the area. There is therefore the need for this study to find out the extent to which political factors influence the appointment of members of governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers in federal and state universities in North Central States of Nigeria.

The choice of North Central States of Nigeria as the area of this study is predicated on the fact that the area is educationally backward in Nigeria and is multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic thereby making universities in the area more vulnerable to political manipulations and influence. An empirical study of this nature could therefore help to minimize the undue influence of politics on federal and state universities in the area and consequently improve standard and productivity in federal and state universities.

Statement of the Problem

In North Central Nigeria, concerns have been expressed by stakeholders, especially staff and students of universities, over the likely influence of political factors on personnel matters such as the appointment of members of governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers in federal and state universities. Prominent among these concerns is the alleged use of power and authority by visitors to appoint members of governing councils, vice-chancellors and other principal officers to positions on the basis of political considerations. The area is multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-linguistic, thereby making personnel matters vulnerable to political manipulations and influence.

It is speculated that in the universities in the area, members of governing councils and vice chancellors and other principal officers are not appointed on merit, that it is done on the basis of ethnic, religious, sectional, catchment area, quota system and partisan considerations rather than on qualifications and merit. These speculations are weighty enough to warrant an empirical investigation. The problem of the study is therefore: what political factors influence appointment of governing councils, vice-chancellors and other principal officers in federal and state universities in the North Central States of Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to determine the extent political factors influence personnel management in federal and state universities in the North Central States of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine how political factors influence the:

1. Appointment of members of governing councils of federal and state universities in the North Central states of Nigeria.
2. Appointment of vice chancellors and other principal officers of the universities.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What political factors influence the appointment of members of governing councils of federal and state universities in the North Central, Nigeria?
2. What political factors influence the appointment of vice chancellors and other principal officials of federal and state universities?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the staff of federal and state universities on the political factors that influence the appointment of members of governing councils in the North Central states of Nigeria.
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of the staff of federal and state universities on the political factors that influence the appointment of vice chancellors and other principal officers in the North Central, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

This section reviewed the literature which is pertinent and relevant to the study.

Politics and Education

A careful analysis of the organization and administration of education in modern society will show that it is closely interwoven with politics and politicking. Uchendu (1995) posited that the union of politics and education within a common frame of philosophy was uniquely symbolized by the figure of Socrates. According to him, Socrates was the first person who designated politics and education as distinct and above all interrelated subjects of systematic inquiry. Denga (1999) and Ogbonnaya (2009) corroborated this opinion when they said that no one can take education out of politics, nor can anyone take politics out of education. This means that education and politics are linked together in all societies.

Brembeck (1997) remarked that while schools are not themselves political institutions, they are products of the political process. In recognition of the relationship between education and politics, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) stated that education is not only the greatest force that can be used to bring about redress, but it is also the greatest instrument that a nation can make for the quick development of its economic, political, sociological and human resources.

That education, particularly university education, is highly rated in a country like Nigeria should not come as a surprise because of the upsurge in the awareness of the general public about the prestige, importance and value of education (Okonkwo, 2006). There is therefore a very high demand for university education and the passionate desire of common men and women to give their children better chance in life, gave the demand for education its explosive quality: hence the influence of political factors on appointments in federal and state universities in the North Central States of Nigeria.

From the preceding review, it is clear that politics and education are fused together. It is very difficult to separate one from the other in modern times. Politics fashions education and education modifies politics. It is against this background that this study investigated the influence of political factors on the appointment of members of governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers in federal and state universities in North Central Zone.

Politics and the Appointment of Council Members of the Universities

According to Ogbonnaya (2009), a "Governing Council" is a statutory body constituted by the federal or state government for the control of policy, finance, personnel and physical resources of a university, polytechnic or college of education. It is also responsible for policy making and regulations. The council is the highest political body of any university and its membership comprises persons from both inside and outside the university community (Williams, 1988). Ogbonnaya agrees that the governing councils of tertiary institutions consist of highly rated individuals drawn from different geo-political zones for federal higher institutions or different Senatorial zones in the case of state institutions.

In North Central States of Nigeria, members of the governing councils of federal and state universities consist of government (governor's) appointees who represent a variety of interests in the community and the insiders who are invariably staff of the universities and who are normally in the minority. Today in the universities in the area, observers believe that the governor's power and authority to appoint members of the governing councils, Vice-Chancellors, Rectors, Provosts and other heads of universities in the area is considerably influenced by political factors. The governor, who incidentally is the visitor to all the state universities, is alleged to appoint council members and principal officers of the universities mostly from his ethnic or sectional background. Ogbonnaya (2009) corroborated this allegation when he observed that a good number of key offices including the Vice-Chancellors are usually appointed based on religious or ethnic sentiments. He contended that when this happens as is mostly the case in the universities; the council will not succeed in accomplishing its constitutional objectives or functions.

Mclendon (2003) reported that:

The politicization of the appointment of members of governing councils and heads of higher education by increasingly activist governors, has caused state higher education coordinating boards and system governance structures to take direction from governors rather than from professional educators, again raising questions of exactly what sort of exact balance should exist between politicians and their state's public higher education (P.170).

It is also remarked by Marcus (2001) that recent reports, for instance of the politicization of university governance in New York and elsewhere, raises important questions about the extent to which governors and other elected officials might be using their powers of appointment and budget to control public university governing boards. According to him, in recent years, governors have emerged as visible, active policy makers with significant influence on university education especially in area of staff employment, appointment and promotions. As noted by Schmidt (2001), governors often handpick board members to bring the college campus

under partisan control.

As has been stated, in most geo-political zones in Nigeria, the governor's power over budget is the principal instrument of political control that he exerts on the universities. In states where governors exercise their "power of the purse", their fiscal leadership has the potential of exercising a great deal of influence on the management of their universities and other higher institutions (Tandberg, 2006). He uses this "power of the purse" to appoint some members of the councils and heads of universities particularly from his ethnic and political background. Williams (1988), Johnstone, Arora and Expertion (1998) and Mclendon (2003) observed that the idea is to foster ethnic domination and loyalty in the management of universities so as to enhance political aspirations.

Politics and the Appointment of Vice Chancellors of the Universities

The governor's authority to appoint members of public universities' such as vice chancellors so as to bring universities under partisan control, could sometimes lead to rancor and bitter in-fighting and a times open confrontation that may have serious consequences on the effective personnel management in the institutions (Williams 1988, Ajayi and Ayodele, 2004). Ethnicism and sectionalism could be brought into play depending on the ethnic, sectional or ideological composition of the councils and the senate. As Knott and Payne (2001) and Loss (2003), have pointed out, state governors may be concerned with appointing qualified vice chancellors of universities, the power of appointment is the subject of occasional abuse by governors who choose to play politics with university education.

According to Mgbekem (2004) and Adegbite (2007), packing governing councils with political faithfuls and appointing vice chancellors for the express purpose of undercutting the constitutional independence or autonomy of universities has always been challenged by ASUU and students' unions of these institutions. In agreement, Ajayi and Ayodele (2004) noted that government involvement in university governance through the appointment of political stooges as vice chancellors has been a point of strife between the government and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) for some time now and this negates effective management of higher institutions.

In Nigeria where majority of the people do not frown at political favouritism, the appointment of unqualified persons as vice chancellors of federal and state universities would most likely compound the proper management of the universities. The fact that governments at both federal and state levels appoint vice chancellors, who share their political views, shows that they have ulterior political motives. According to Knott (2001) and Mgbekem (2004), the governors' power to appoint vice chancellors and other principal officers of the universities undermine the constitutional independence of universities and is often an attempt by governors to hold the institution under strict partisan control. Dika and Janosik (2002) maintain that there is no question, however, that the governors' power of appointing vice chancellors gives them a direct route into the internal affairs of universities. Corroborating this assertion, Florestano (1989), reported that most governors said they appoint members of governing boards and vice chancellors who share their political vision and who will initiate and implement their policies in higher education. It is against this background that the relevant stakeholders in university education in the area of study have alleged that the appointment of members of governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers is a political ploy by governments to erode university autonomy and academic freedom in federal and state universities in North Central State of Nigeria.

There is therefore a felt need for this investigation since stakeholders in North Central States of Nigeria have expressed concern over the perceived tendency of the governors to appoint council members and vice chancellors mostly from their ethnic background and for other ulterior political motives. This, in their opinion amounts to undue political interference in personnel matters in the management of the universities. The likely impact of the manipulation of such political factors on the appointment of members of governing councils, vice chancellors and other principal officers in federal and state universities in the area under study is the focus of the study.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design. The area of the study is North Central, Nigeria. It is one of the six geo-political zones in the country. North Central, Nigeria comprises Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger and Plateau States, and Abuja Federal Capital Territory. The population of the study was 10 universities made up of five federal and five state universities in the area. The population of the respondents consisted of 11,582 made up of 7,971 federal universities staff and 3611 staff of state universities. (Registry Departments of the Universities, 2013). The sample of the study was 10 universities made up of five federal and five state universities and the sample of the respondents consisted of 767 staff of federal universities and 353 staff of state universities. A total of 1120 or 10% of the federal and state universities' staff from a population of 11,582 was selected for the study. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique of balloting without replacement was used to select the respondents for this study. The main instrument that was used for data collection was the

structured questionnaire titled “Influence of Politics on Appointment Questionnaire (IPAQ)”. The instrument was a 14 - item questionnaire structured on the four- point rating scale with a response mode of Strongly Agree (SA)-4, Agree (A)-3, Disagree (D)-2 and Strongly Disagree (SD)-1. The items were validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation and three experts in Educational Management from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and Benue State University, Makurdi. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument for the study, the researcher administered the questionnaire to twenty (20) respondents comprising 10 academic staff of the University of Nigeria Nsukka and 10 senior administrative staff of Enugu State University of Technology. The completed questionnaire was analyzed for reliability using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. A reliability estimate of .97 was established for the whole instrument. This was considered high enough to consider the instrument reliable for the study. In view of the large geographical location of the respondents of the study, the researcher engaged ten research assistants that assisted in administering and collecting back the questionnaire in the universities. The Interview Schedule was conducted by the researcher face-face with the respondents. The descriptive statistics of mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t -test analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is a presentation of the results and discussion of the study.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in respect of the findings of the study.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference ($p < .05$) between the mean rating scores of the staff of federal and state universities on what political factors influence the appointment of members of governing councils in the North Central, Nigeria.

To test the null hypothesis, a t -test analysis of the differences between the mean ratings of the staff of federal and state universities was computed and the result is shown on Table 1.

Table 1: t -test Analysis of responses of staff of federal and state universities on the political factors that influence the appointment of members of governing councils.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES		STATE UNIVERSITIES		t	p	DECISION
		\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂			
1.	External council members are appointed on the basis of political party affiliations	2.80	1.02	3.01	.94	3.210	.001	S
2.	Sectional considerations do not influence the appointment of council chairman	2.45	.93	2.75	.97	4.972	.000	S
3.	Ethnic sentiments influence election of internal members of council	2.84	.94	2.88	.94	.210	.834	NS
4.	Catchment area policy is a factor in the appointment of council members	2.89	.90	3.01	.82	2.097	.036	S
5.	Religious affiliations influence composition of members of council	2.33	.96	2.14	.91	3.168	.002	S
6.	Quota system is used in the appointment of members of council	2.78	.87	2.85	.90	-.364	.173	NS
7.	Council Chairman appoints Committee members on the basis of tribe	2.15	.97	2.04	.94	1.828	.068	NS
	Cluster	2.61	.47	2.66	.49	1.773	.076	NS

The mean difference is significant at $P < .05$

Data on Table 1 shows the t -test analysis of the responses of staff of federal and state universities. The table shows that items 3, 6 and 7 have calculated t -values .210, -.364 and 1.828 respectively. These are not significant at $P < .05$. H_0 was accepted in respect of these items. Items 1, 2, 4 and 5 have calculated t – values of -3.210, 4.972, -2.097 and 3.168 respectively and are significant at .05 level. H_0 was rejected for items 1, 2 and 4 in favour of federal universities.

The overall t – value is 1.773 with the significant value of .076, which is above 0.05 level. Hypothesis one was accepted for the cluster means. This shows that there was no significant difference between the mean rating scores of the staff of federal and state universities on their perceived influence of politics on the appointment of members of governing councils in the universities. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected in favour of state universities who had a stronger opinion than federal universities.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference ($p < .05$) between the mean rating scores of the staff of federal and state universities on what political factors influence the appointment of Vice Chancellors and other Principal Officers.

To test the null hypothesis, a t -test analysis of the differences between the mean ratings of the staff of federal and state universities was computed and the result is shown on Table 2.

Table 2: t -test Analysis of the responses of the staff of federal and state universities on the political factors influence appointment of Vice Chancellors and Principal Officers (N = 1120, DF = 1118)

S/N	Questionnaire Items	FEDERAL		STATE		t	p	DECISION
		X_1	SD_1	X_2	SD_2			
8.	Ethnic considerations are key factors in the appointment of vice chancellors	2.87	.97	3.06	.96	-3.050	.002	S
9.	Party affiliations do not influence the appointment of vice chancellors	2.3	1.03	2.55	.96	3.114	.002	S
10.	Appointment of vice chancellors is based on sectional sentiments	2.66	.92	2.61	.90	.817	.414	NS
11.	Catchment area policy influences the appointment of vice chancellors and deputy vice chancellors	2.89	.84	2.86	.87	.535	.592	NS
12.	Religious affiliations is considered in the appointment of vice chancellors and deputy vice chancellors	2.31	.95	2.25	.93	.893	.372	NS
13.	Quota system is a key factor in the appointment of vice chancellors and deputy vice chancellors	2.28	.99	2.53	1.02	3.965	.000	S
14.	Tribal considerations rather than qualifications and merit determine the appointment of vice chancellors	2.07	1.08	2.06	1.02	.122	.903	NS
	Cluster	2.49	.50	2.56	.49	-2.25	.025	S

The mean difference is significant at $P < .05$

Data on Table 2 shows the t -test analysis of staff of federal and state universities. The data indicate that items 10, 11, 12 and 14 have calculated t -values of .817, .535, .893, and .122 respectively. These are not significant at $P < .05$. H_0 is not rejected in respect of these items. However, items 8, 9 and 13 with t -values of -3.050, -3.114 and -3.965 are significant at $P < .05$. H_0 was rejected in respect of these items in favour of state universities.

The overall t -value is -2.246 with the significant level of .025 which is below .05 level. These indicate that there are significant differences between the mean rating scores of the staff of federal and state universities on their perceived influence of politics on the appointment of vice chancellors in the universities. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected in favour of state universities who had a stronger opinion than federal universities.

Discussion of Results

Influence of political factors on the appointment of members of governing councils in federal and state universities in the North Central Nigeria

Respondents from both federal and state universities in the North Central, Nigeria agreed that partisan

political affiliations, sectional considerations, ethnic sentiments, catchment area, the quota system and favouritism significantly influence the appointment of the members of governing councils in federal and state universities. However, there were some significant differences in the mean rating scores between the staff of federal and state universities on some of the political factors that were agreed to influence the appointment of council members in both universities.

Some of the above findings are consistent with Ogbonnaya (2009) who observed that a good number of the members of governing councils and vice chancellors of higher institutions are appointed on the basis of sectional, tribal, ethnic, religious sentiments and the catchment area policy. He further stated that when this happens as is mostly the case; the councils of higher institutions will not succeed in accomplishing its constitutional objectives or functions.

However, some of the findings are not consistent with the views of Schmidt (2001) who contended that members of governing councils who are appointed on the basis of political considerations faithfully implement the welfare programmes of their parties thereby improving the conditions of service of their university personnel. He also added that politically appointed members of governing councils sometimes champion the training and development of their staff through in-service and study-leave with pay programmes within and without their institutions.

Influence of political factors on the appointment of vice chancellors and other principal officers of federal and state universities in the North Central, Nigeria

Majority of the respondents agreed that sectional, tribal, ethnic and partisan political considerations influence the appointment of vice chancellors and other principal officers of federal and state universities. The respondents also agreed that the catchment area policy and the quota system of appointment also constitute significant political factors that influence the appointment of vice chancellors, deputy vice chancellors and other principal officers of both federal and state universities. However, there were significant differences in the mean rating scores between the staff of federal and state universities. In order words, they differed in their opinions on the influence of partisan political affiliation and the quota system policies on the appointment of vice chancellors in federal and state universities.

These findings are in line with Knott (2001) and Mgbekem (2004) who reported that the governors' power to appoint vice chancellors and other principal officers of the universities undermine the constitutional independence of the universities and is often an attempt by governors to bring the institutions under strict political control. Some of the items of the findings are also consistent with Schmidt (2001) who observed that governors often handpick members of governing councils and vice chancellors who share their political vision so as to bring universities under partisan control.

Florestano (1989) however disagreed with some of the findings when he remarked that most vice chancellors' appointments are devoid of political manipulation and influence. According to him, as centers of learning and research, vice chancellors of universities are mostly appointed on the basis of merit and experience rather than on political considerations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that sectional, ethnic and partisan political factors, catchment area and the quota system influence the appointment of council members, vice chancellors and principal officers in federal and state universities

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the implications of the study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Government should come up with a policy that ensures that prospective members of governing councils of universities are thoroughly screened by a Congregation Committee (CC) of each university and recommended or otherwise before their appointment. Since the congregation is made up of academic and senior administrative staff, it will enable them to know the political antecedents of the prospective members with a view to making proper recommendations.
2. The appointment of heads of universities, like Vice chancellors, Principal offers, Deans and Directors, should be made by a Senate Search Committee (SSC) with candidates of impeccable credentials as members, keeping the best interest of the institution in view.

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