Political Influence, Students' Admission and Staff Recruitment in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria

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Abstract: *This paper explores the influence of political influence on students' admission and staff recruitment in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Utilizing a quantitative methodology relying on secondary data sources from both print and online mediums, the study employed content analysis to distill and analyze relevant literature. Key findings from the study highlight political influence on students' admission and stagaining itmen n tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Based on the findings from this study, the paorganizationmmends the need for greater transparency and merit-based selection processes in both student admission and staff recruitment in the various tertiary institutions to ensure fair and equitable access to higher education and employment in various tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This paper concludes with recommendations for policymakers of tertiary institutions to mitigate the negative impact of political influence on the students' admission and staff recruitment processes by granting full autonomy to the tertiary institutions in Nigeria.*

Keywords: *Admission, Political influence, Recruitment, Tertiary Institutions.*

Introduction

Tertiary education or Higher education covers a wider range of higher learning institutions including the university. These higher learning institutions could be organized in different ways, commonly within a university and in a separate institution as university and other tertiary learning institutions (Alemu 2018). Tertiary education is defined by the National Policy on Education (2013) as the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-UniverThis isuch as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI).

Tertiary education or higher education is a set that constitutes the university, which is a subset of higher education. However, in some contexts, higher education and university are used interchangeably (Assié-Lumumba, 2005). Tertiary education, also called post-secondary education, is any level of education pursued beyond high school, including undergraduate and graduate credentials. These credentials encompass certificates, diplomas, or academic degrees. Tertiary education refers to specialized education in a specific field, taken on after finishing high school. Tertiary education is non-compulsory and provided in a specialist institution, usually a college, polytechnic, or university. This form of education may be delivered virtually or at a distance (Top-hat, 2023).

Tertiary education offers a broad range of academic disciplines and professional programs, including bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, doctoral degrees, and professional certifications. It focuses on in-depth exploration of subject areas, critical thinking, research skills, and the development of specialized expertise (Proctoredu 2023). Tertiary education is an organized educational system that is consciously designed for manpower production, in-service training, and national development. Tertiary education is

an education that advances teaching, research, and community services for national development. Tertiary education is an education industry that is meant for the production of manpower and national development via the implementation of teaching, research, and provision of community services (Ogunode, 2025).

The objectives of tertiary education include; providing higher education opportunities via effective teaching, researching, and provision of community services; developing and producing students with specialized knowledge and skills for solving personal problem and national problems; preparing the students for the national workforce and contributing to societal and community development; to provide academic program of various disciplines; to provide quality instruction in field of studies and to conduct researches to generate new knowledge for national development and to solve complex problems (Ogunode, 2025).

Tertiary institution and community relations are critical to the attainment of tertiary education goals; school community relations can be described as the degree of understanding and goodwill achievement between the school and the community (Oboegbulem, in Osuji, 2015). This is in line with the views of Ogbonnaya in Osuji, 2015) that the relationship between the school, the community, and the ruling political parties is guided by policies and decisions that affect the school management positively/or negatively. It has been observed that interference or influences of government have some influences on the management and policies that guide school management.

Government influences policies on funding, staff personnel administration, provision of basic infrastructures/equipments, and school community relations. When the influence is favourable to the school management, development, and progress to achieve their goals, it is regarded as positive because the management has an adequate supply of all its needs to achieve its goals, but when the influence is unfavourable to the management, it is regarded as negative because the influence of the government is affecting the smooth running of teaching and learning making it impossible to achieve the goals of the school management. Therefore, the stated objectives will not be achieved. It is imperative to examine the impact of political influence on students' admission and staff recruitment in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The objectives of this paper are to examine the impact of political influence on students' admission and staff recruitment in the Nigerian tertiary institutions:

1. To find out the impact of political influence on the admission process in Nigerian tertiary institutions; and

2. To find out the impact of political influence on the recruitment process in the Nigerian tertiary institutions

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following questions were formulated

1. To what extent is the impact of political influence on the admission process in Nigerian tertiary institutions? and

2. To what extent is the impact of political influence on the recruitment process in Nigerian tertiary institutions?

Literature Review

Recruitment

Recruitment is the act of employing an individual into an organization or institution to carry out a designed function at a particular time. Recruitment is the whole process of finding, identifying, sourcing, screening, shortlisting, and interviewing candidates for jobs within institutions such as educational institutithe ons. Recruitment is al,so the process involved in identifying and choosing individuals for defined functions in an orgation. Recruitment is the process of selecting, identifying, and choosing an individual who meets the requirements for placement in an organemploymentctively the seeking out, finding, and ,hiring candidates ,for a specific position or job. The recruitment definition includes the entire hiring process, from inception to the individual recruit's integration into the company (Ogunode & Ahmad, 2022).

Students Admission

Students' Admission is the process of gaining entry into an educational institution to run a programme for some time. Students' admission is permission given to a person to study in a school. It is permission given to a student to enter an educational institution to pursue an academic program for some time. Student admission is also the act of entering into a school for coursework that will last for a while. Students apply for admission to a particular college. Every educational institution has its requirements before issuing admission to students. It is expected that the students meet the requirements before being granted admission to study an academic program.

Political Influence

Political Influence refers to the ability of entities, such as corporations or organizations, to shape political decisions and outcomes. Influence is the power or force to make other people or institutions agree to your bidding. Political influence is the use of power many much literature includedups, or institutions to obdome dominatess and carry out actions in the intere, especiallyhe political actostudentsence refers to the act of using constitutional power to influence policies, decisions, and actions of individuals, groups, and institutions to agree to the bidding of political figures. The process of political influence sometimes comes from lobbying groups, media, and public opinion. Political influence, according to Spacey (2023), is the power to change the direction, decisions, and actions of groups. This can apply to any group, but it is most often used to describe the power to influence decisions, policies, and actions of government.

Method

This study used a quantitative research approach that employed a systematic literature review-based method. Literature search methods were adopted using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines (Adnyana, 2023; Paulus et al., 2023).

Result and Discussion of Political Influence on the Admission process and Recruitment Process in tertiary institutions in Nigeria

Q1. To find out the impact of political influence on the admission process in the Nigerian tertiary institutions

Ajayi (2005) noted that in any institution of learning, there are specific admission policy requirements for students' admission into various academic programmes in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. Political influence has a great impact on the management of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. A study by Muhammed (2018) established that there is a significant relationship between political influence and students' admission to various universities. In conclusion, Osuji (2011) noted that one of the pressing problems facing the management of higher institutions in Nigeria is the involvement of political forces

that dictate the admission process. Much preference has been given to political considerations rather than due process and merit systems in students' admission into higher institutions in Nigeria (Ogunode, Atobauka, & Ayoko, 2023). Although it is expected that admission into tertiary institutions should be conducted on merit and quota system, this is not the situation on the ground. Professional programmes like Medicine, Engineering, and law are mostly politically influenced.

Moreover, Caleb (2019) opined that the admission process in most universities and polytechnics is influenced by political factors, as certain individuals or groups may have an advantage over others in gaining admission. This can lead to a lack of diversity and hinder the overall educational experience for students. Ogunode and Musa (2022) maintained that admission in some public universities is hijacked by political officers. They sent their candidates to various vice-chancellors for admission into professional programmes. They also maintained that politicians in Nigeria influenced admissions for their family members and themselves even when they didn't meet the standard. Alika, (n.d.) opined that admission and assessment of students at the tertiary levels, especially the public universities, are heavily tainted by corruption, nepotism and egregious discrimination in favour of indigenes of states in which universities are located, beyond and in violation of prescribed guidelines. The violation is perpetrated with impunity because JAMB officers are either complicit or ineffective. Aboh (2014) submitted that in Nigeria and other corrupt countries of the globe, admissions are sometimes given to students because such students are from the same family, religious background, or political affiliation with the person in authority. The study also found that politics has a significant influence on students' admission process in higher institutions in Benue State, Nigeria (Pinga, Ivase, & Nomayu, (n.d). Osuji (2011) found out that much preference has been given to political considerations rather than due process and merit system in students' admission to higher institutions in Nigeria.

Q2. To find out the impact of political influence on the recruitment process in the Nigerian tertiary institutions

Recruitment in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is also influenced by the political forces funding the institutions. Political influence in tertiary institutions can lead to biased recruitment and a lack of equal opportunities for all staff. President of ASUU, Emmanuel Osodeke (2022), lamented that most of the staff members employed through the back door or with political influence have become scavengers in the system who go after money, forgetting what they were employed to do. Nwodm, (2021) concluded that process of recruitment in the university seemed to be hijacked by persons in authority and politicians outside the University to favour specific candidates in the process. The stance of the Union was based on the fact that there was no form of competitiveness in the selection process because it did not give qualified and quality personnel a fair chance of applying for the vacant positions thus sweeping merit under the carpet. Not following this initial procedure creates room for maneuvering the process as favoured candidates are most likely to be recruited during the exercise. Musa (2016) established that recruitment into tertiary institutions in Nigeria is politically influenced. Joseph (2017) ascertained that recruitment processes in institutions across Nigeria are characterized by political influence. Ogunode, Ajape and Jegede (2020) opined that politicians have at least a slot in any recruitment processes in the Nigerian higher institutions. Sometimes their candidates may not qualify; they influence their employment against the policies of the institutions. The activities of political officeholders and politicians in the Nigerian higher institutions are threat to the sustainability of higher education policies. Government interference in school management to a large extent has influence the management in different ways. It is observed that in areas of employment within education sector, politics to a large extent determines who is to be taken and who is not to be employed (Osuji, 2015).

Findings

The study discovered that students' admission and staff recruitment in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria are influenced politically. The political influence are political actors in government or past government

administrators such as the Presidency, Governors, Ministers, Commissioners and officials in education agencies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper examined the political influence on students' admission and staff recruitment in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. Specifically, the paper focused on finding out the impact of political influence on students' admission in the Nigerian tertiary institutions; and to find out the impact of political influence on staff recruitment process in the Nigerian tertiary institutions.

The study, after reviewing many literatures, concluded that political influence dominate the tertiary institutions in Nigeria especially in the areas of students' admission and staff recruitment in the various institutions across the country.

Overall, the impact of political influence on admission process, and recruitment in tertiary institutions in Nigeria cannot be overlooked. It is imperative that the political influence is carefully monitored and regulated to ensure fair and equal opportunities for all students and applicants to enhance the continued development of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Government to address this problem of political influence, should grant full autonomy to the tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

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