
INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL POWER ON RESOURCE ALLOCATION IN NIGERIA UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

This study assessed how organizational power influence resource allocation in Nigerian universities. Three research questions were answered and one null hypothesis was tested. The study utilized a descriptive survey design. The population for the study was 750 and a sample of 311 using stratified random sampling. A test-re-test method was used in establishing the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered to thirty respondents in the population who were not part of the sample. It was re-administered after two weeks on the same respondents. The two scores were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) formula to determine the reliability of the instrument and a coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) were used to answer research questions while the hypothesis was tested using a z-test. Findings show that Deanship elections/appointments have the highest organizational power base at both universities while Staff Promotion has the least. Findings further revealed that both staff, Deans and HODs of federal and state universities use organizational power strategies for critical university resources. The test of hypothesis shows that state universities use more organizational power strategies than federal universities. The staff of state universities use more sweet words, create goodwill, and act friendly towards those in positions to grant their requests and get their share of the universities' resources more than their federal counterparts. Based on the findings, it is strongly recommended that transparency and accountability should guide decisions on resource allocation in Nigerian universities.

Keywords: Influence, Power, Resource Allocation, Nigerian Universities

Introduction

Nigeria has experienced an enormous increase in student enrolment in public universities since 1960 when independence was achieved. Presently, the nation has acquired numerous universities including both public and private. As the universities, especially the federal and state-owned are witnessing an increase in student enrolment, it is expected that funding and resources would also increase to meet increasing needs in the systems. This appears not to have been the case. It is noteworthy that the administrators of both federal and state universities have been complaining of gross

underfunding for a long time now. According to Udoh (2008), Nigeria as a developing nation is currently witnessing increased enrolment of university applicants. This increase in enrolment demands a corresponding increase in funding which has not been the case. In the view of Udoh, fund and resource allocation have not been increased to meet the demand for funds/resources occasioned by the enrolment increase. Meanwhile, Onuoha (2013) reported that the federal government, through the National Universities Commission (NUC), has continuously directed all federal universities to generate a minimum of 10% of their total annual resources from internally such that their managements would not have to look up to the government alone to meet all financial needs.

Poor funding has put both the federal and state universities in a very tight corner in terms of development and achievement of goals and objectives. As noted by Imhabekhai and Tonwe (2001), the unfortunate challenge of poor funding brings so many incessant crises in the system, resulting in frequent unrest and indiscipline by academic, and non-academic staff and students. Underfunding and shortage of resources also appear to pose a serious decisional problem to administrators of these universities on how to equitably and fairly allocate their meagre resources among the communities.

Mberekpe (2013) views resources as materials, which help in doing something. Also, Barney and Hesterly in Gakenia (2015), advanced that resources in general include the following key constructs: resources, capabilities and competencies. Resources must be valuable, rare, inimitable, and lack substitutes to give a competitive advantage and hence superior performance. Meanwhile, Usman (2016) see education resources as the teachers, non-teaching employees, real objects, specimen or models, chalk and display boards, school buildings and layout, the community at large and other fundamental materials like pencils, pens and exercise books which the learners and teachers are expected to have at any point in time to facilitate teaching and learning. Resources for university employees could also include housing/accommodation, housing loans, furniture or furniture loans, official car or car refurbishing loans, research grants or scholarships, study leave, staff promotion/appointment, and sabbatical leave, among others. Allocation of these resources has continued to play an important role in organizational performance hence the need to create formulated strategic plans and ways that will ensure equitable allocation among members of the university community (Gitau, Abayo & Kibuine, 2020).

Effective resource allocation is believed to have some organizational developments that are geared towards the improved performance of the organization (Lemarleni in Gitau, Abayo & Kibuine, 2020). Meanwhile, Kogan, Papanikolaou, Seru and Stoffman's (2017) study on technological innovation, resource allocation and growth established that how well resources are defined and allocated will contribute to the effective running of the organization. Thus, allocation needs careful planning since the process can sometimes be hard and when resources are not allocated as expected it will become very hard to implement the strategy of an organization.

Resources in Nigerian universities have often been complained to be in short supply by federal and state universities leading to serious scrambling by various interest groups to get a fair share. As a result, the various interest groups within the system

often resort to the use of organizational political power style which often culminates in situations where some faculties, departments, members and even individuals within the university community resort to “who you are” and “who you know” to guarantee that they benefit from such scarce resources. As earlier reiterated power now appears to be the game changer in who gets what in many universities in Nigeria. Power strategies employed include the use of ‘logical’ arguments based on sweet words to support requests, the creation of goodwill and acting friendly towards those in top administration and resource allocation committees for favour amongst others. In the words of Akpakwu and Okwo (2014), as resources are generally scarce to satisfy the competing needs of various interests in the university, resource allocation committee members and dispensers of the meagre resources are bound to make choices from available alternatives. It, therefore, seems that many members of these resource allocation committees and top management allow themselves to be influenced by undue power and political considerations from both within and/or outside the institutions and take decisions that seem to discriminate against laid down rules and regulations on resource allocation.

The issue of inadequate resource allocation appears to be more severe with state universities in Nigeria than federal. This could be because of the high proliferation of tertiary institutions in many states. According to Onukwugha, Ochoga and Okeke (2018), many states in Nigeria today are in a race to a championship over who will own the highest number of universities. This is even though many such state universities bear enormous responsibility for governance and financing various public institutions in their domains. Indeed, the growing concern over underfunding, high-level organizational political tussle and perceived power play in resources allocation in Nigerian universities made the authors look at the issue of power play in resources allocation in Nigerian universities through this empirical channel.

Statement of the Problem

Organizational power play appears to be an important determinant in who gets what within the Nigerian university system. It is generally believed that organizational power play has seriously jeopardized the art of good governance in many federal and state universities for personal interest resulting in a high level of the interplay of organizational influence for resources within the system. Therefore, it appears that a faculty’s or department’s or individual’s ability to influence the top administration and/or members of the resource allocation committee faster than others determines what resources they get. However, the extent to which organizational power influences the allocation of various resources in Nigerian universities has remained unclear. The dearth of empirical data on this subject matter raised a major research problem. Consequently, the researchers assessed the influence of organizational power play in the relative advantage some faculties, departments and members of staff in Nigerian universities have over others in the allocation of vital resources.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess the influence of organizational power on resource allocation in Nigerian universities. Specifically, this study assessed:

1. The rankings of the resources allocation which have the highest or lowest organizational power base;
2. Organizational power strategies used and the extent staff use such power strategies to arrogate universities resources to themselves;
3. Resource acquisition strategies and the extent means and HODs use such power strategies.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the course of this study:

- i. What resource allocation has the highest or lowest organizational power base?
- ii. To what extent do staff use organizational power strategies to ensure the success of their applications?
- iii. To what extent do Deans and HODs use power strategies to ensure the success of their applications?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis is that the extent to which staff of federal and state universities use power strategies will not be significantly different.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design. The population included all the senior staff, past and present Deans, Directors and H.O.Ds, Professors and Associate Professors and principal officers of all the State and Federal universities located in six universities in three-geopolitical regions of Nigeria. A sample of 311 was drawn from the population using stratified random sampling. The study used a structured instrument which was validated by three experts in business education and business management. A test–retest method was used in establishing the reliability of the instrument. The instrument was administered to thirty respondents in the population who were not part of the sample. It was re-administered after two weeks on the same respondents. The two scores were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient (r) formula to determine the reliability of the instrument and a coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. The study used a four-point instrument which was weighted 4,3,2 and 1. Administration of the instrument was conducted through briefed research assistants who were recruited from the target institutions. The research questions were analyzed using mean and Standard Deviation (SD) and the hypothesis was tested using a z-test at a 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was upheld because the probability (p) value is greater than the level of significance of 0.05 otherwise it would be rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What resource allocation has the highest or lowest organizational power base?

Table 1: Resources with Highest or Lowest Organizational Power Base

S/n	Items	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Housing Loan	7.93	2.91	4 th
2	Furniture Loan	8.42	2.84	2 nd
3	Car Refurbishing Loan	8.12	2.71	3 rd
4	Staff Housing Loan	7.30	2.33	5 th
5	Research Grant	5.79	2.14	8 th
6	Study Leave	6.42	2.23	7 th
7	Staff Promotion	3.79	2.82	12 th
8	Sabbatical Leave	6.11	2.33	6 th
9	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Appointment	3.90	3.11	11 th
10	Deanship Appointment	10.24	2.40	1 st
11	Departmental Headship	4.55	2.93	9 th
12	Appointment into committees	4.10	2.93	10

Federal = 196 State = 115 Total = 311

The result in Table 1 showed the ranking of the resource allocation with the highest or lowest organizational power base. Deanship election/appointment has the highest organizational power base with a mean score of 10.24 and a standard deviation of 2.40. Staff Promotion/Appointment ranked the lowest with a mean score of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 2.82.

Research Question 2: To what extent do staff use organization power strategies to ensure the success of their application?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on extent staff use organization power strategies

S/n	ITEMS	Federal Mean	SD	Decision	State Mean	SD	Decision
1	Use facts/data to make a logical argument to support your request	3.38	1.17	Sometimes utilized	3.40	1.23	Sometimes utilized
2	Use sweet words, create goodwill, and act friendly towards those in the position to grant your request	3.11	1.23	Sometimes utilized	3.47	1.15	Sometimes utilized
3	Seek the support of friends or associates in the system to back up your application.	3.04	1.18	Sometimes utilized	3.46	1.17	Sometimes utilized
4	Negotiate through the presentation of favours to those in a position to grant your request,	2.40	1.22	Rarely utilized	2.57	1.23	Sometimes utilized

5	Use approaches such as repeatedly demanding compliance with your request, ordering individuals to do what they have to do, and reminding them that rules require their compliance	2.73	1.10	Sometimes utilized	3.03	1.02	Sometimes utilized
6	Seek the support of higher authorities within the system to back up your request.	2.84	1.19	Sometimes utilized	3.08	1.25	Sometimes utilized
7	Use the machinery of the reward and punishment system to threaten those in the position to grant your request, that you could block their appointments to other positions or benefits.	1.97	1.14	Rarely utilized	1.99	1.14	Rarely utilized
8	Try to create discord between the chairman and members in the hope that this will work to your advantage	1.76	1.02	Rarely utilized	1.73	1.01	Rarely utilized
9	Do something spectacular in some tasks or activities you are assigned to get the chairman and members' attention so that they turn to support your request.	2.59	1.24	Sometimes utilized	2.88	1.26	Sometimes utilized
10	Seeking the support of the chairman or members of the committee by reminding them of your past favours to them.	2.46	1.22	Rarely utilized	2.74	1.24	Sometimes utilized

Federal = 196 State = 115 Total = 311

Table 2 indicates the extent staff use power strategies to influence their applications for universities' resources. The staff of federal universities agreed that they sometimes use items 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9. These items have mean values of 3.38, 3.11, 3.04, 2.73, 2.84 and 2.59 with standard deviations of 1.17, 1.23, 1.18, 1.10, 1.19 and 1.24 respectively while they indicated that they rarely use the other items on the table. The staff of state universities agreed that they sometimes use items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10 with standard deviations of 1.23, 1.15, 1.17, 1.23, 1.026, 1.25, 1.26 and 1.24

respectively to get approval for their requests while they agreed that they rarely use items 7 and 8.

Research Question 3: To what extent do Deans and HODs use power strategies?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation analysis of the extent Deans and HODs use power strategies

S/n	ITEMS	Federal Mean SD		Decision	State Mean SD		Decision
1	Use facts/data to make a logical argument to support your request	4.06	0.89	Sometimes utilized	4.20	0.88	Sometimes utilized
2	Use sweet words, create goodwill, and act friendly towards those in the position to grant your request	3.01	1.31	Sometimes utilized	3.23	1.18	Sometimes utilized
3	Seek the support of friends or associates in the system to back up your application.	2.51	1.09	Sometimes utilized	2.60	0.99	Sometimes utilized
4	Negotiate through the presentation of favours to those in a position to grant your request, whenever you have the opportunity to do so.	2.58	1.05	Sometimes utilized	2.80	1.03	Sometimes utilized
5	Use approaches such as repeatedly demanding compliance with your request, ordering individuals to do what they have to do, and reminding them that rules require their compliance	2.43	1.13	Rarely utilized	2.70	1.16	Sometimes utilized
6	Seek the support of higher authorities within the system to back up your request.	2.63	1.10	Sometimes utilized	3.07	0.89	Sometimes utilized
7	Use the machinery or rewards and punishment system to threaten those in a position to grant your request, that you could block their appointments to other positions or benefits.	2.01	1.12	Rarely utilized	2.70	1.11	Sometimes utilized

8	Try to create discord between the chairman and members in the hope that this will work to your advantage	1.96	1.24	Rarely utilized	2.73	1.23	Sometimes utilized
9	Doing something good or spectacular on some assigned task or activities to get the chairman and members' attention so that they turn to support your request.	2.54	1.16	Sometimes utilized	3.10	1.07	Sometimes utilized
10	Seeking the support of the chairman or members of the committee by reminding them of your past favours to them.	2.46	1.23	Rarely utilized	2.84	1.23	Sometimes utilized

Federal = 196 State = 115 Total = 311

Table 3 indicates the extent heads of departments use power strategies to achieve their goals. All Heads of departments sometimes utilized 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 9 as strategies to get approval for their requests. These items have mean scores ranging from 2.51 – 4.06 and standard deviations which ranged from 0.89 – 1.31. However, Heads of Departments from federal universities rarely utilize the other items but their counterparts from state universities agreed that they sometimes use all the remaining items as resource acquisition strategies. These items have mean scores ranging from 2.60 – 4.20 and a standard deviation from 0.88 - 1.23.

Test of Null Hypotheses

Hypothesis: The mean ranking of power strategies adopted by the staff of Federal and State universities in Nigeria will not be significantly different.

Table 5: Summary of z-test analysis of the power strategies

Institutions type	N	Mean	SD	Df	Z	P	Decision
Federal	394	2.5957	.62507	658	-5.021	.000	Significant
State	260	2.8215	.52146				

The result in Table 5 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and degree of freedom of 658, the p-value of .000 is greater than the z-value of -5.021. This means that there is a significant difference in power strategies and the extent to which staff of federal and state universities use such power strategies to arrogate university resources to themselves. The finding showed that state universities utilize more powerful strategies than their counterparts in federal universities. Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that the mean ranking of the power strategies and the extent to which staff utilize such power strategies between state and federal universities will not be significantly different was rejected. There was a significant difference.

Discussion of Findings

The finding on research question one showed that Deanship election/appointment ranked highest as the university resource with the highest organizational power based in both federal and state universities. Staff promotions ranked lowest for federal universities while Deputy Vice Chancellorship appointments ranked lowest for state universities. Scrambling and power playing for the Deanship position could be very high because it is a major qualification for the Vice-chancellorship position in Nigerian universities. The aspiration to occupy the office of Vice Chancellor, therefore, places many professors in the hot contest to serve as Deans. However, staff promotion is mainly based on annual performance appraisals in most Nigerian universities with the exemption of academic staff who require the addition of a certain number of publications before they are promoted. Again, other items such as car loans and furniture loans are rarely available for staff to politick and power play about. Sabbatical and annual leaves may not be so political because approval of these leaves in most universities is based on laid down rules and procedures and it is only top-ranking staff that are qualified for this. The Deanship election/appointment which is highly political and powerful based should, therefore, also be based on laid down rules and procedures that cannot be flaunted. This will make the election/appointment to be less power based.

The result of research question two shows that staff of both federal and state universities use power strategies to acquire resources. All respondents almost always adopt power strategies such as the use of facts/logical arguments, the creation of goodwill and acting friendly to those in a position to grant their requests for scarce university resources. In addition, the staff also seek the support of higher authorities within the system to back up their requests and get the chairmen/members of resource allocation committees and top management's attention to supporting their requests. This indicates that the resources available to the universities are perceived to be inadequate hence, most staff resolved to use unethical processes and practices to get their share of the hot resources. The unfortunate incidence of inadequate resources and poor management of available resources engender the use of power strategies which often culminates in situations where some faculties, departments, members and sections within the university community resort to "who you are" and "who you know" to guarantee that they benefit from such scarce resources. This is unhealthy for an ivory tower that is expected to produce transparent and transformational leaders for the various sectors of the nation's economy. This finding is in line with the views of Imhabekhai and Tonwe (2001) that inadequate funding and shortage of critical resources in Nigerian universities have led to rampant crises in the system resulting in strikes by academic and non-academic staff, indiscipline among staff and students and in most cases upsurge in the activities of secret cults.

The finding of research question three shows the extent Deans of faculties and heads of departments use power strategies to influence resource allocation. Respondents from state universities agreed that they sometimes utilize all the power strategies listed. However, their counterparts from federal universities agreed to the use of facts/logical arguments to support their request for resource allocation. In addition, respondents from federal universities agreed that they sometimes seek the support of higher authorities, support of friends or associates in the system to back up their applications and also negotiate through the presentation of favours to those in

different positions to grant their requests, whenever they have opportunity to do so. They also do something good or spectacular on some assigned task or activities to get the chairmen and members' attention so that they can also support their requests but disagreed with all the other items as resource acquisition strategies applicable to them. The test of hypothesis showed that there is a significant difference in power strategies and the extent to which staff use such power strategies to ensure the success of their applications for university resources between federal and state universities. The finding showed that respondents in state universities utilize more powerful strategies than their counterparts in federal universities to ensure the success of their applications. Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that the difference between the mean ranking of the power strategies and the extent to which staff of federal and state universities utilize such power strategies will not be significantly different was rejected. There was a significant difference. This could be because there is more shortage of resources in so many state universities than in federal universities. Also, the States solely bear the responsibilities of governance and financing of their public higher institutions (Akpakwu & Okwo, 2014) making it extremely difficult for them to meet the resources needs of these institutions adequately. Besides, for some time now, there has been a high proliferation of state-owned tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This corroborates the views of Onukwugha, Ochoga and Okeke (2018) who stated that many states in Nigeria today are in a race to a championship over who will own the highest number of tertiary institutions at the expense of meagre resources.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that there is so much power play among various interest groups at both federal and state universities in Nigeria to arrogate scarce university resources to themselves. This unfortunate development has often resulted in "who you are" and "who you know" to guarantee benefit from universities' scarce resources thereby entrenching political power play as the order of the day in who gets what. This shows a situation where those who are not so powered drunk or have not mastered how to play such power games tend to lose out in the acquisition of such scarce resources. Based on the findings of this study, it is strongly recommended that transparency and accountability should be the rule of the game in resource allocation in Nigerian universities. Also, leadership and administration in Nigerian universities should be transformational than transactional. Again, the allocation of resources should strictly follow laid down rules and regulations to guarantee fairness and equity.

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