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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE ON THE APPOINTMENTS OF HEADS OF COLLEGES IN ADAMAWA STATE

ABSTRACT

Effect of Political Interference on the Administration of Colleges in Adamawa State: A Comparative Analysis of Adamawa State College of Education, Hong and College of Agriculture Ganye. A descriptive survey design to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current situation was employed. A stratified random sampling technique ensured representation from various colleges, encompassing a population of 6680 individuals. Structured questionnaires were employed to gather data on appointment processes. Quantitative data analysis utilized statistical tools, with descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The study's findings highlight the need for reforms in appointment processes, emphasizing transparency, merit-based criteria, and minimizing political influence. Recommendations include depoliticizing appointments, enhancing fairness, and implementing antinepotism policies. These reforms aim to improve institutional autonomy and educational quality in Adamawa State's colleges. The study's significance lies in its potential to guide policymakers, educators, and researchers in making informed decisions to enhance college administration.

Keywords: Adamawa, Appointment, Comparative Analysis, Political Interference, Colleges

Background

Tertiary education in Nigeria consists of colleges, polytechnics, and different post-secondary professional training Universities, institutions. However, the Nigerian college system is currently plagued by several problems that hinder it from serving its expected roles in promoting national development. One factor that has impacted colleges of education and colleges of Agriculture in the country is political interference which engenders political influence. The political influence in the administration of public Colleges in Nigeria in recent years has been identified as one of the factors giving rise to crises in colleges. The influences are responsible primarily for the numerous problems hindering the development of Colleges s in Nigeria. Therefore, with these immense disruption in the systems of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, Nnenne (2011) opined that government interference in school management to a large extent has influenced the management in different ways. It is observed that in areas of employment within education sector, politics to a large extent determine who is to be taken and who is not to be employed.

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Omemu (2015) observed that qualification and hard work which are supposed to be the parameters for the appointment of principal officers in higher institution of learning are hardly adhered to when political forces set in.

Relatively Ogunde, Ajape and Jegede (2020) stated that politicians in Nigeria influence admission for their family members and themselves even when they don't meet the standard. Further observation was the work Ogunde and Ajape (2021) where they assert that politicians both at the federal and state level especially those at the position of president and state governors influences location of higher institutions to their states and communities to attract development and achieve political gain by altering the national documents on setting educational institutions in the country. This interference adversely affects even the admission process as in the work of Aboh (2014) noted that in Nigeria and other corrupt countries of the globe, admissions are sometimes given to students on the grounds that such students are from the same family, religion background or political affiliation with the person in authority.

Key words: Politics, administration, appointment, interference, affiliation.

Colleges of Agriculture that make up the present day division of Agriculture colleges, Ahmadu Bello university dates back to 1921. It started when the British cotton growers association (BCA) introduced an in service training canter at Maigana, on the outskirts of Zaria, in the then Zaria province. Traditional practices of cotton growing were modernised by introducing the concepts of commercial agriculture. The first students undertaking formal training admitted in 1931 were sponsored by various native authorities and Northern regional government becoming agricultural assistants on graduation in 1932. This center later metamorphosed into Samaru School of agriculture which later became the present Samaru College of agriculture (SCA), with the primary objectives of training middle- level manpower for agricultural development in Nigeria. In 1951, the livestock service training canter, Mando road, Kaduna, was established to train livestock personnel, later becoming the college of agriculture and animal science (CAAS).

In 1964 a third school was established with assistance of the US government at Kabba, in Kabba province, to cater specifically for horticulture and needs to riverine agriculture in Northern Nigeria. This later became the Kabba College of agriculture (KCA). Agriculture colleges have the mandate of training middle level manpower in various fields of agriculture. The colleges run certificate courses, pre national diploma (pre-ND) and various courses in agriculture at both national Diploma (ND) and higher national diploma (HND) levels. Curriculum standards are set and regulated by the national board for technical education (NBTE). Admission of students is coordinated by the joint admission and matriculation board (JAMB) along with other tertiary institutions in Nigeria and requirements for admission to the colleges are same. Statement of problem: In Adamawa State, the problem of political interference in college administration is particularly acute. The state has a history of turbulent political dynamics, with political parties and individuals vying for control of educational institutions. This has resulted in frequent changes in college leadership, disrupted academic calendars, and a general lack of stability and continuity in the management of these institutions. Hence, the present study intends to examine the effect of political interference on the administration of Colleges in Adamawa State. Political influence manifests in the following ways in the administration of public tertiary institutions: employment/recruitment, the appointment of school administrators (Provosts, Bursar, Registrar) planning and establishment of public Colleges, location of Colleges of Education, the appointment of council members, expansion of National Colleges of Education Commission power and admission of students. Ogunode (2020) defined college administration as the application of the Colleges resources to implement the programme of the Colleges

with the aims of realizing the objectives of the Colleges. Colleges' administration is the mobilization and arrangement of both human and material resources for the achievement of the college's goals. College administration is the effective use of the resources of the college to implement the teaching programme, research programme and community service of the Colleges. College administration is the deployment of the Colleges resources to accomplish the Colleges programme. The objectives of college administration include: to implement the programme of the Colleges as defined; to allocate resources for the implementation of the Colleges programme; to ensure implementation of teaching programme, to ensure effective staff development, to ensure effective students administration, to ensure smooth implementation of academic calendar and to ensure quality education.

Further observation carried out was the work of Okeke (2007) who observed that politics play a great role in decision making and control the management and administration of educational establishments. He further pointed out that politics in education may be seen as the means for resource allocation to different ethnic groups to achieve their set educational goals. Ololube (2013) argued that the existing political arrangement has influence the control over educational planning in Nigeria.

Yawe, Ivagher, and Ijov (2015) also noted that political interference in higher institutions of learning in Nigeria has degenerated so much that credibility is completely eroded, as principal officers of higher institutions such as vice chancellors, deputy vice chancellors, provosts, rectors, and registrars among others are appointed on the basis of political affiliations, sectionalism, nepotism, tribalism as well as religious beliefs. The implication of qualification not been yardstick for the appointment of such principal officers. Further Abu (2015) observed that state government often do handpick principal officers in higher institutions based on party affiliations. Olayinka (2018) opined that planning administration and management of educational sector are influenced by the political party in Nigeria.

The political influence in the administration of public tertiary institutions in such ways,

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The question to ask is what are the effects of political interference on the administration of college of Education, Hong and College of Agriculture, Ganye? This will provide ways of exploring in terms comparison of the consequences befalling the appointments of the heads of institutions, where the research tried to assess the effects of political interference on the administration of College of Education, Hong and College of Agriculture, Ganye.

Theoretical Framework

The study is rooted in systems theory, a framework asserting that an organization functions as a social system comprising integrated parts. Originating from David Easton in 1953, this theory conceptualizes a system as a set of interrelated and interdependent components where the interaction of

any part affects the entire system. Within this paradigm, each part of the system relies on interactions with other components to function effectively. The relevance of systems theory to the education system, specifically schools, lies in their complex, interactive and structurally and operationally examined nature. Schools, as social systems, share identical properties with other societal systems, making the theory invaluable for understanding their objectives, functions, and ultimate goals.

This research investigates the dynamics of administrative processes at Adamawa State College of Education in Hong and Adamawa State College of Agriculture Ganye through the lens of systems theory. It seeks to comprehend the inter-connectedness of decision-making, resource allocation, and overall governance within the educational system, unveiling how external political influences act as dynamic forces within this intricate network. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the study involves qualitative interviews with key stakeholders and quantitative data analysis of administrative records to achieve a comprehensive understanding. The application of systems theory principles aims to illuminate systemic nodes vulnerable to political interference, facilitating a holistic examination of its impact on the college's administration. By adopting this lens, the research not only contributes to theoretical knowledge but also provides practical insights. It informs systemic interventions and recommendations for fostering resilience and adaptability within the administrative processes of the educational institutions, addressing the significant challenges posed by political interference on colleges administration and their developmental processes.

This research investigates the complex dynamics of the administrative processes at Adamawa State College of Education in Hong and Adamawa State College of Agriculture Ganye employing a systems theory framework to unravel the systemic implications of political interference. The study aims to comprehend the inter-connectedness of decision-making, resource allocation, and overall governance within the educational system, elucidating how external political influences act as dynamic forces within this complex network. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, qualitative interviews with key stakeholders and quantitative data analysis of administrative records will be conducted to provide a comprehensive understanding.

Methodology

The data collected were through questionnaire presented in tables based on the statement of the various hypotheses. The test statistics employed was the analysis of variance using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) for the suitability of the test.

3.1.1 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, which involved summarizing and organizing the data to understand its main characteristics. This included calculating measures such as the mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and range to provide a comprehensive overview of the data's distribution and central tendency.

In addition to the descriptive analysis, hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). ANOVA is a statistical method used to compare the means of three or more groups to determine if there are any statistically significant differences between them.

3.1.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study is the entire staff academic, non-academic and students of Adamawa State College of Education, Hong and College of Agriculture Ganye. The total population consists of 6680 individuals of both staff and the students. The primary objective is to explore their opinions and assess the impact they have made on the effects of political interference on the administration of Adamawa State College of Education, Hong and Adamawa State College of Agriculture Ganye. Based on the population of the respondents in College of Education, Hong. (84.86%) questionnaires were distributed while College of Agriculture, Ganye (15.0%) questionnaires were also distributed

3.1.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

Determining a representative sample from a total population involves using statistical methods to ensure that the selected sample accurately reflects the characteristics of the entire population. The Taro Yamane formula is commonly used for this purpose. The sample for the study was 400 going by the Taros formula.

3.1.4 Data presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

The work tried to analyze the effect of political interference on the administration of colleges in Adamawa state there by choosing Adamawa state college of Education, Hong and College of Education Ganye. The article mainly dwells on the appointment of the heads of these institutions; however, the targeted institutions were compared based on the response from the data collected.

 Table 3:1.4a Mean and Standard Deviation of the responses of political interference on the administration of College of Education, Hong.

| S/N | Item | Mean | SD | Decision |
|-----|--|------|------|----------|
| 1 | Political interference has undermined the academic | 3.21 | 0.72 | Accepted |
| | freedom and autonomy of the College of Education. | | | |
| 2 | Decisions regarding curriculum, faculty appointments, | 3.15 | 0.69 | Accepted |
| | and resource allocation at the College are strongly | | | |
| | influenced by political considerations rather than | | | |
| | academic merit. | | | |
| 3 | The College's ability to uphold high educational | 3.28 | 0.81 | Accepted |
| | standards and provide quality teacher training has been | | | |
| | compromised due to political pressure. | | | |
| 4 | There is a noticeable lack of transparency and | 3.42 | 0.77 | Accepted |
| | accountability in the administration of the College, as | | | |
| | political agendas take precedence over institutional | | | |
| | policies. | | | |
| 5 | The pervasive political interference has had a detrimental | 2.51 | 0.83 | Rejected |
| | impact on the College's reputation for fulfilling its core | | | |
| | mission of educating future teachers. | | | |

Accept (\bar{x} is 3.0 and above); Reject (\bar{x} is less than 3.0).

| Table 3.1.4b: Mean and | Standard Deviation | of the responses | of political | interference o | n the |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|-------|
| administration of College | of Agriculture, Ganye |) | | | |

| S/N | Item | Mean | SD | Decision | | |
|-----|---|------|------|----------|--|--|
| 1 | Political interference has undermined the academic | 4.43 | 0.17 | Accepted | | |
| | freedom and autonomy of the College of Education. | | | | | |
| 2 | Decisions regarding curriculum, faculty appointments, | 3.67 | 0.57 | Accepted | | |
| | and resource allocation at the College are strongly | | | | | |
| | influenced by political considerations rather than | | | | | |
| | academic merit. | | | | | |

| 3 | The College's ability to uphold high educational standards and provide quality teacher training has been compromised due to political pressure. | 4.68 | 0.99 | Accepted |
|---|--|------|------|----------|
| 4 | There is a noticeable lack of transparency and accountability in the administration of the College, as political agendas take precedence over institutional policies. | 2.45 | 0.65 | Rejected |
| 5 | The pervasive political interference has had a detrimental impact on the College's reputation for fulfilling its core mission of educating future teachers. | 4.42 | 0.91 | Accepted |

Accept (\bar{x} is 3.0 and above); Reject (\bar{x} is less than 3.0).

The results of the analysis presented in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 reveal significant differences in the perceptions of political interference at the College of Education, Hong, and the College of Agriculture, Ganye.

Table 3.1.4a: College of Education, Hong

The mean responses indicate that political interference is perceived as a substantial issue affecting several aspects of the College of Education, Hong. The items with the highest agreement include the lack of transparency and accountability (Mean = 3.42, SD = 0.77) and the compromise of high educational standards due to political pressure (Mean = 3.28, SD = 0.81). This indicates a strong belief among respondents that political agendas are taking precedence over institutional policies, undermining both academic freedom and educational quality. The item regarding the College's reputation (Mean = 2.51, SD = 0.83) was the only one rejected, suggesting that while political interference is seen as damaging in many areas, its impact on the College's overall reputation may not be as severe or is perceived differently by the respondents.

Table 3.1.4b: College of Agriculture, Ganye

In contrast, the responses from the College of Agriculture, Ganye, present a mixed but generally more critical view of political interference. The mean responses are notably higher for several items, indicating a stronger agreement on the detrimental effects of political interference. For instance, the undermining of academic freedom and autonomy received a very high mean (Mean = 4.43, SD = 0.17), as did the compromise of high educational standards (Mean = 4.68, SD = 0.99). These values highlight a profound concern about political interference's impact on the College's operations and quality of education. Interestingly, the item about transparency and accountability (Mean = 2.45, SD = 0.65) was rejected, suggesting that this particular issue might not be as prominently affected by political interference, or it might be perceived differently by the respondents. Comparative Analysis

When comparing the two tables, several key differences emerge. First, the overall perception of political interference appears more severe at the College of Agriculture, Ganye, with higher mean values across most items except for transparency and accountability. This suggests that respondents at Ganye feel more strongly about the negative impacts of political interference on academic freedom, quality standards, and the College's reputation. In contrast, the College of Education, Hong, while also experiencing significant political interference, shows a more moderate perception of its effects.

The standard deviations in both tables indicate the variability of responses. For instance, the College of Agriculture, Ganye, has higher standard deviations for the compromise of high educational

standards (SD = 0.99) and the detrimental impact on reputation (SD = 0.91), suggesting a wider range of opinions among respondents on these issues. In comparison, the College of Education, Hong, shows relatively lower standard deviations, indicating more consensus among respondents.

3.5 Hypotheses Testing

H0₁: Political interference has no significant effect on the administration of College of Education, Hong and College of Agriculture, Ganye.

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|--|
| Between Groups | 2.461 | 13 | .292 | 1.213 | 0.001 | |
| Within Groups | 91.551 | 350 | .241 | | | |
| Total | 92.012 | 363 | | | | |

Table 3.5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Analysis of Political interference on the administration of College of Education, Hong and College of Agriculture, Ganye.

P < 0.05 (Not Significant)

The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) presented in Table 4.11 indicate that there is no significant effect of political interference on the administration of the College of Education, Hong, and the College of Agriculture, Ganye. The ANOVA table shows that the F-statistic (F = 1.213) is lower than the critical value needed for significance at the conventional alpha level of 0.05. Additionally, the p-value (p = 0.001) is greater than 0.05, further supporting the conclusion that political interference does not have a statistically significant impact on the administration of these educational institutions. This finding suggests that, based on the data analyzed, variations observed in administration cannot be attributed to political interference.

Discussion of Major Findings

The analysis of the appointment process for heads of colleges in Adamawa State provides valuable insights into the perceptions and procedures surrounding these appointments. This discussion synthesizes key findings from the survey responses, highlighting both strengths and concerns regarding transparency, meritocracy, political influence, criteria clarity, fairness, and nepotism, where the interference is perceived less critically. These findings highlight the need for tailored interventions to mitigate political interference and enhance institutional autonomy and educational quality in both colleges.

The analysis underscores the importance of effective leadership in educational institutions and its impact on staff welfare. While the College of Education, Hong, shows a generally positive perception of leadership, the College of Agriculture, Ganye, reveals significant dissatisfaction. This disparity highlights the need for targeted interventions to improve leadership practices and address specific staff concerns, particularly in institutions where leadership is perceived negatively. Ensuring that appointed Heads of College prioritize staff welfare and address their needs is crucial for improving job satisfaction and overall institutional performance.

The findings point to a need for both colleges to bridge the gap between administrative actions and student perceptions, especially in improving learning environments and resources. Despite positive ratings for the impact on academic performance and support, the dissatisfaction with leadership and management effectiveness highlights areas for further development and communication.

The comparative analysis of the two tables underscores the importance of not only appointing capable Administrative Heads but also ensuring that their leadership leads to visible and appreciated improvements in student experiences and learning conditions.

Respondents generally perceive the appointment process as transparent, indicating a consensus among participants that the procedures are clear and understandable (Viso, 2019). Transparency in the process is crucial as it ensures accountability and fosters trust among stakeholders involved or observing the appointments. There is a positive perception regarding meritocracy in appointments, although slightly less emphatic than transparency. This suggests a favorable view, but there is variability in opinions, possibly reflecting concerns about the consistent application of merit-based criteria. This was supported by similar by Elujekwute, (2019).

Political influence emerges as a significant factor in the appointment process, highlighting the belief among respondents that political considerations play a substantial role in the selection of college heads. The variability in responses may indicate differing personal experiences or perceptions regarding the extent of political influence. Respondents strongly agree that the criteria for appointments are well defined and effectively communicated. This suggests a structured process where stakeholders are well-informed about the qualifications and standards expected for potential appointees, thereby enhancing transparency and understanding. This was supported by Giner, (2020).

A significant concern highlighted by respondents is the prioritization of qualified and experienced candidates in the appointment process, leading to the rejection of this statement (Gonsalves, 2020). This indicates widespread skepticism among respondents that the most deserving candidates consistently receive priority in appointments, possibly due to varying interpretations of qualifications or inconsistencies in their application.

The perception of fairness and unbiased selection in appointing heads of colleges is notably low, indicating moderate agreement among respondents on this issue (Ogunode and Ayoko, 2023). This finding underscores a prevalent belief that the current process lacks impartiality, which could erode trust and legitimacy in the appointment outcomes. Nepotism appears to influence the appointment process significantly, reflecting a general acceptance of its prevalence (Okoli and Ewor, 2016a). This concern highlights the perception that familial and personal connections often supersede meritocratic principles in the selection of college heads, potentially undermining organizational effectiveness and fairness.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study offers a balanced assessment of the appointment process for heads of colleges in Adamawa State. While strides have been made in transparency and criteria communication, persistent issues such as political interference, nepotism, and the overlooking of qualified candidates continue to undermine fairness and effectiveness. The findings emphasize the importance of addressing these systemic challenges through measures like enhanced transparency, merit-based criteria, independent oversight, and anti-nepotism policies. Moving forward, a concerted effort is needed to implement these reforms comprehensively, ensuring a fair, efficient, and competent leadership selection process that supports institutional integrity and enhances overall educational outcomes in Adamawa State colleges.

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