

Office of the Registrar in Nigerian Public Universities: Problems and Suggestions

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Abstract

The article discussed the problems facing the office of the Registrar in Nigerian public universities. Secondary data was used to support the points raised in the article. This article obtains the secondary data from print material and online publication by recognized institutions and individual author. Some problems facing the office of Registrar of Nigerian public universities include; inadequate funding of the office of Registrar, inadequate staff/over-staffed, inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate working materials, poor capacity development of staff in the Registrar's office. To solve these challenges, this article recommends: that the school administrators should increase the funding of the office of Registrar, provide adequate infrastructural facilities, employment of more staff/deployment of staff out, provision of adequate working materials and effective staff development programme for staff in office of the Registrar.

Keywords

Challenges, Registrar, University, office

1.0 INTRODUCTION

University can be defined as “a community of teachers and scholars who commit themselves to the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and its acquisition through learning, research and scientific enquiry (Briggs,2012)”.The university is saddled with the responsibilities of engaging in scholarly activities with the aim of expanding the frontiers of knowledge and innovations, inventions and discoveries of new thing.The universities are also known educating, teaching and transferring of knowledge to students. The university’s scholars participate in activities both at the local and international arena to contribute to the development of the society and the world at large.

The university is structured to work with key principal officers like the Registrar. In the university governance, the office of the Registrar is the fourth in the line of authority. The principal officers of university are Vice Chancellor, the Chancellor, Pro Chancellor, Registrar, Bursar, university and Librarian.

The office of the Registrar is responsible to the office of the Vice-Chancellor for the day-to-day administration of the University while the Bursar is responsible to him for the day-to-day administration of the financial affairs of the University. The Vice-Chancellor is the Chief Executive and Academic Head of the university. Law vestshim with the general function of directing the activities of the university for which purpose he is advised and assisted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Registrar, Bursar, University Librarian, the Provost, Deans and Heads of Department.

The Registrar is the Chief Administrative Officer of the university and is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the day-to-day administration of the affairs (except financial affairs) of the University. The office of the registrar handles the administrative activities of the university, keeps the university records, oversee the administration of affairs such as academic; establishment; information; public relations; student s affairs; recruitment and promotion of staff; keepers of records and Secretary to committee and as from time to time assigned to him by the Vice-Chancellor.Registry office is presently organized into three main divisions: academic, personnel, general administration. Registrar office is an important office in the university system. The office of the Registrar is one office that less research/article has been conducted or written about. It is based on this that this article aims to discuss the challenges facing the office of the Registrar in the Nigerian universities.

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Concept of the Registrar office

The Registrar is the Chief Administrative Officer of the university and is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the day-to-day administration of the affairs (except financial affairs) of the University. The Registrar office is the administrative hub of the university. This office handles all the administrative matters of the university. The Registrar office takes charge of the information management of the university. Registrar is the head of the registrar office. The registrar of the universities is assisted by career offices such as Deputy Registrars, Principal Assistant Registrar, Senior Assistant Registrar, Assistant Registrar, Administrative Officers; Administrative Assistants and executive secretaryon the other cadre include Executive Office, Higher Executive Officer, Senior Executive Officer, principal executive. Assistant Deputy chief Executive Officer, Chief Executive Officer.

The Registrar shall be appointed by the Council who shall be the Chief administrative officer of the university and shall be responsible to the Vice chancellor for the day-to-day

administration of the university except as regards matters for which the Bursar is responsible. The registrar shall hold office for five years beginning from the effective date of his appointment and on such terms and conditions as may be specified in the letter in his letter of appointment, and may be re-appointed for one further period of five years and no more.

The function of the registrar shall be:

A) to keep in custody all record of the university;

B) to arrange for conduct of examination;

C) to act as secretary to and be responsible to the Vice-chancellor for executive action arising from a decision of Council, Senate, Congregation, Convocation, and such other bodies as the statutes may prescribe or the Vice-Chancellor or the Vice-Chancellor may direct;

D) to assist the Vice-Chancellor in the general administration of the university;

E) to ensure that the university publications such as the university calendar, university prospectus, staff handbook, student handbook, university gazette, handbook on administrative procedures are updated and released regularly;

F) to handle establishment matters for senior, junior, intermediate, academic, non-academic and technical staff;

G) to liaise with the administrative unit heads and to network with staff and students unions in creating a conducive climate for the functioning of the university; and finally

H) to organize, direct and coordinate the activities of the administrative component of the university (FUW, Academic Brief,2015).

The Registrar is the principal administrative officer of the university. He is directly responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the day-to-day administration of the university. The office of the Registrar is known as Registry. The Registry provides secretariat services to all Units of the University. Registrar is the secretary of Council, Senate and Congregation. The office of the Registrar handles formal correspondence on appointment, resignations, contracts, supplies, legal and property matters. The Registry contains several numbers of divisions, which include Establishment office, Academic office, Council of general administration, development and the liaison office. The office of the Registrar is the secretariat of the universities. The office receives official document within and outside the universities for the consumption of the university. Registrar office handles all issues of employment, promotion, termination of appointment, Staff development programme and all issues in the establishment.

3.0 Methodology

The objective of this article is to discuss the challenges facing the office of the Registrar. The researcher used secondary data. The researcher relies on published secondary data from reputable sources including review of published articles from reputable international journals such as CEON, Elsevier, Hindawi, JSTOR, IEEE, LearnTechlib SAGE, Nebraska and Springer amongst others. This work used Content Analysis in the selection and analysis of papers, journal and abstract used for the article. The design adopted for this article was to show understanding of the problems facing the office of the Registrar and how to solve it. This study employed content analysis method by selecting the relevant content of the various literatures related to this study; and the literature review enable the overall development of the study, which ordinarily centered on theoretical and conceptual exploration.

4.0 Challenges facing Registrar Department of Nigerian Public Universities

Some problems facing the office of the Registrar in some Nigerian public universities include; inadequate funding of Registrar departments, inadequate staff/over-staffed, inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate working materials, poor capacity development of staff in office of the registrar and leak of confidential information.

4.1 Inadequate Funding

Inadequate funding is one challenge facing the office of the Registrar of many Nigerian universities. The yearly budgetary allocation for the administration and management of the office of the Registrar is not adequate. The office of the registrar is the engine room of the universities; it requires large sums of funds for internal administration and management. The impress for the management is too small. Generally, the annual budgetary allocation for the administration and management of the universities from the government is not adequate, and this affects allocation for the others sub-units in the universities. The administration of the universities is capital intensive and more funds are needed to implement the various units within the system so that the goals and objectives of the universities can be wholly realized. The universities can be described as a system with many sub-units that must all functions together in order to fully realize the objectives of the system. The problem of inadequate funding is a general problem facing the entire university system. Osunyanmi, (2018), Okoli, Ogbondah, & Ewor, (2016), Ogbondah (2010) and Uzoka, (2007) all agreed that inadequate funding is a major problem facing the university education in Nigeria. Therefore, government must provide adequate funds for the survival and sustainability of the university system in Nigeria.

4.2 Inadequate Staff /Overstaffed

Another problem that is facing the office of the registrar in some of the Nigerian universities is under-staffed or over-staffed. Some offices of the registrar in some universities across the country are understaffed and this is affecting the administration of the office. The non-academic staffs working in such offices are over worked and they don't rest from office responsibilities while academic staff in office registrar where the office is over-staffed. Staffs here are redundant and have less work to do. Some of the academic staff here roams about from office to office because they lack official duty to handle or execute. This submission is in line with NEEDS (2014) who reported that many Nigerian universities are overstaffed with non-academic staff.

4.3 Inadequate Infrastructural Facilities

Inadequate infrastructural facility is another major problem facing office of the Registrar in the Nigerian universities. Infrastructural facilities refer to those social capital that enable both academic and non-academic staff to discharge their functions without hindrance. Modern and adequate infrastructural facilities remain the bedrock of effectiveness and efficiency performance in the universities system. The infrastructural facilities for staff include; spacious and well furnished offices, uninterrupted power and water supply, ICT facilities, office equipment such as table, office chairs, fans, stable internet services, good road network among others. It is unfortunate that many registry departments in Nigerian universities do not have adequate offices to accommodate their staff. Due to inadequate offices, this makes many staff of registry department to share offices, office meant for two or four staff ended be filled with ten. The inadequate infrastructural facilities of many registry departments are affecting the smooth administration of the universities since the major administrative function of the universities comes from the registrar's office that oversees the registry department. There is no how academic staff can effectively discharge its responsibilities in an work environment not conducive due to lack of offices and office equipments. Inadequate infrastructural facility

is a common problem facing the entire university system. Research revealed that most universities in the Northeast Nigerian do not have adequate infrastructural facilities. Udida , Basse, & Udofia, (2009), John, (2016) and Ojo (2018), also agreed that inadequate infrastructural facilities is a problem facing the universities.

4.4 Inadequate Working Materials/ input

The office of the Registrar is one office in the Nigerian universities that is always busy with administrative works of the universities. The office of the Registrar uses much office equipment due to the responsibilities the office is performing. Office equipment include Stapler, Eraser, Push-pin, Drawing pin (U.K)/ Thumbtack (U.S), Paper clip, Rubber stamp, Highlighter, Fountain pen Pencil, Marker, Ballpoint, Bulldog clip, Tape dispenser, Pencil sharpener, Label, Calculator, Glue, Scissors, Sticky notes, 4A Paper, Notebook, Envelope, Clipboard, Monitor, Computer, Keyboard, Folder, Fax, Filing cabinet, Telephone, Swivel chair, Desk, Wastebasket, printer and calculators are inadequate in some offices of the Registrar across the various universities in the country and this is affecting the administration of the universities since the administration of the universities depends on the office of the Registrar. There are many factors responsible for this inadequate working equipment in most office of the Registrar in the Nigerian universities. Some of the caused include inadequate funding of the universities, lack of maintenance, and mismanagement of the resources, institutional corruption and poor supervision. John (2018) submitted that the inability of the university system to provide the adequate working materials to the non-academic staff is affecting the provision of services in the universities.

4.5 Poor Capacity Development of Staff

Training and retraining programme for academic staff is key to the realization of the universities' objectives. Non-academic staff needs constant training and retraining to function properly and be at the top of his work. Continuous professional development is the key to upgrade the skills, knowledge and technical know how of the academic staff to be positioned for an excellent job performance in the universities. It is unfortunate that as important as training and retraining programme is to the development of academics in the universities and for the realization of the universities objectives, that much attention is not given to non-academic staff of the Nigerian universities especially those working under the office of the registrar. Many staff working under the office of the registrar has not been given the opportunity to go for training and retraining programme to upgrade their administrative skills and knowledge of working in a corporate establishment like the office of the registrar. The poor capacity development of many non-academic staff in the Nigerian universities is affecting their productivities. Poor capacity development of staff is a challenge facing the entire university system in Nigeria. Adejare, Olaore, Udofia, Emola (2020) did a study to determine the extent to which induction, demonstration, on-the-job and formal training which are all elements of employee training and development enhance managerial efficiency by looking at employee productivity and quality of service delivery. The results revealed that on-the-job training has a significant negative relationship with the quality of service delivery in Nigerian universities ($t = -4.454$), ($p < 0.05$) and $\beta = -0.20$) which could be because most Nigerian universities do not deliberately place new employees to learn directly from a current employee in order to improve their performance. Hence, the study shows that the only way to resolve inefficiency among non-academic (administrative) staff in public tertiary institutions is to integrate effective training into employee career management and adopt employee performance evaluation process as contained in the private organizations. Basil, Felix, Eno

(2013) and Bernadette & Ukaegbu, (2017) also submitted that poor staff development is a problem facing the universities in Nigeria.

4.6 Leak of Confidential Information

Leak of confidential information from the office of the registrar is another major problem facing the office of the registrar in some Nigerian universities. The registrar office is the administrative hub of the universities. Office of the registrar is saddled with the responsibilities of keeping the fundamental document of the universities. The registrar office is the secret office of the universities where confidential document, minutes of official meeting, circular coming in and going out are kept. The registrar office is a central office that manages all the confidential information of the universities. It is amazing that due to poor capacity or lack of professionalism, many staff of the office of the registrar leak official document to the public or official committee report that are supposed to be within the reach of only school administrators and managers.

4.7 Poor ICT literacy / Inadequate ICT Facilities

ICT literacy is the ability to handle ICT facilities independently and use it for its purpose without assistance. ICT literacy is the ability and capacity to use ICT facilities without seeking for an external help. Many staff working in some offices of the Registrar across the Nigerian universities are not computer literate. They cannot independently use some software in the computer system to type, draw, and computer data/information. They cannot use the computer system to print document and some cannot even use the photocopy machine. Another problem in regarding the application of ICT for teaching is the poor ICT literacy rate level of many academic staff in the Nigerian higher institutions. The problem facing the academic staff of the Nigerian universities is that majorities of them are not computer literate. Another challenge facing the office of the registrar of some universities in Nigeria is the problem of inadequate ICT facilities like computer system and laptop for the staff. Many Nigerian universities failed to provide staff working in the offices of the registrar with laptops and computers in order to enable them carry out their functions properly. The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is the technology that has brought excitement to teaching, learning, and research. It has become a major educational technology. In its simplest form, it can prepare and reproduce handouts or make presentations of learning materials as slides in lecture rooms. It is unfortunate that many higher institutions in the country do not have adequate ICT facilities to support administrative services in the respective institutions in the country. Livinus,(2013) observed in his study that 50% of the respondents have tried to use computer while about 7.5% of them being non-academic counterparts do not. A percentage of 38.5 of academic staff and 33.5 of non-academic staff were not computer literate. Only 11.5% academic and 16.5% non-academic were literate in computer. 37.5% and 44.5% of academic and non-academic staff respectively have no computers of their own. 37% and 33.5% of academic and non-academic staff respectively cannot make use of computer. 13% academic and 20.5% non-academic staff respectively can surf the internet. The level of computer literacy among the staff of the college is unimpressive. It is worthy of note that more of non-academic than academic staff are computer semi-literate.

5.0 Way forward for sustainability of Registrar Department in the Nigerian Public Universities

To solve these challenges, this article recommends: that the school administrators should increase the funding of registrar department, provide adequate infrastructural facilities, employment of more staff/deployment of staff out, provision of adequate working materials and effective staff development programme for staff in registrar department.

5.1 Increase the Funding

For effective administration in the registrar's office, the school administrators and managers should increase the annual budgetary allocation of the office of the registrar to enable the office carry out its fundamental function with no problem. The government needs to increase the funding of the universities so that school administrators can also increase the allocation going to the various sub units in the university system for effectiveness and efficiency.

5.2 Adequate Infrastructural Facilities

Government as well as university authority should provide adequate offices and ICT facilities for the office of the registrar of the Nigerian universities across the country to enable staff working in the department to have adequate offices to work and feel comfortable.

5.3 Employment/ Deployment of Staff

The School administrator and managers of universities are to carry out internal staff audit to identify where there is a problem of shortage and surplus within the university system and carry out deployment exercises to balance the system. With shortage, the universities administrators should employ more registry staff to reduce the workload of the existing staff.

5.4 Adequate Working Materials

The office of the registrar is a powerful office, so the problem of inadequate office equipment should not be mentioned. The school administrators should provide all the office equipment need by the office of the registrar to enable the staff carry out their work with no hindrance.

5.5 Effective Staff Development Programme

Training and retraining programme for non-academic staff, especially those working in the registrar's office is very important to develop their capacity. So, the school administrators should allocate more slot of TET fund staff workshop for staff in the registrar's office.

5.6 Capacity on Information Management

To solve the problem of leakage of confidential information in the Registrar's office, there is a need to organize training for the staff of the Registrar's office on effective Information management. The management should design riot act for staff working in the registrar's office to prevent the leakage of confidential official information from the office of the registrar.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The office of the Registrar is an important office in the university's administration system in Nigeria. The office of the Registrar is the engine room of the universities. This article discussed the problems facing the office of the registrar in Nigerian public universities. The article identified the following; inadequate funding of registrar office, inadequate staff/ over-staffed, inadequate infrastructural facilities, inadequate working materials, poor capacity development of staff in office of the Registrar as the problems facing the Registrar's office of Nigerian universities. To solve these challenges, this article recommends: that the school administrators should increase the funding of Registrar office, provide adequate infrastructural facilities, employment of more staff/deployment of staff out, provision of adequate working materials and effective staff development programme for staff in office of the Registrar.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT:

The author declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.