

IMPACT OF COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP ON QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR GOAL ATTAINMENT OF UNIVERSITIES IN KOGI STATE NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the impact of collaborative leadership on quality assurance for goal attainment of universities in Kogi State Nigeria. Three research questions and 1 hypothesis guide the study. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population for the study comprises of lecturers and senior management staff of the three universities in Kogi State. The purposive sampling technique was used to sample 300 lecturers and 100 management staff. A structured questionnaire was used for collection of data. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions, while an independent sample t-test was used to test the hypothesis. The study's findings showed that collaborative leadership has a positive impact on quality assurance in staff development, teaching, learning, and community engagement. The study therefore recommends among others that collaborative leadership should be adopted in the universities to enhance cordial relationship between the management, staff, and community and thus facilitates goal attainment of Universities.

KEY WORDS: Impact, collaborative, leadership, quality, assurance, goal, attainment

INTRODUCTION

Universities are the highest level of education in Nigeria. FRN (2013) categorized universities under tertiary education as the education given after post-basic education in universities. The goals of tertiary education, amongst others, include; contribution to national development through high-level human resources, training and making possible

for people to reach out to quality learning in both formal and informal education to cater for the needs and interests of all Nigerians. These goals shall be pursued through some of the following ways; quality teaching and learning, research and development, student industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) that is well structured, coordinated and supervised, dedicated services to the community through extra moral and extension services (FRN, 2013 p.52-53).

Leadership is one of the major factors necessary for the attainment of organizational goals. University management face the task of embracing leadership styles that will bring about the achievement of educational goals. Because leadership makes a difference in the quality of teaching, staff development, and community service in any university, the leader must ensure that effectiveness, efficiency, and proficiency are enhanced if quality assurance is to be achieved in any aspect of the university. Ezeaso (2014) stressed that the task of leadership falls on the university management. According to Ezeaso, university management includes; the university governing council, the principal officers, the vice chancellor, deputy vice-chancellors, the registrar, the bursar, the librarian and the senate. Ihebereme (2016) corroborated the idea of Ezeaso with a design of governance structure in the universities with the chancellor at the apex and the students at the bottom.

Different authors defined leadership in different perspective. But a consensus is yet to be arrived at as leadership means different things to different people. Peretomode (2012) stress that leadership involves other people - followers or subordinates. There can be no leader without followers. It is difficult to arrive at a general definition of leadership because of the three major components involved in conceptualising the concepts; an attribute of an office or position, a characteristic of a person and a category of actual behaviour. Other factors enumerated are: the leader's characteristics, the nature of the

task, and the character of the social context in which leadership is to be exercised (Peretomode, 2012).

Okwori and Ede (2012), defined leadership as a relational attribute which emphasizes the behaviour of the person concerning the behaviour of the group to facilitate the solution to a groups' problem. Onuma (2013) corroborate with the above definition by viewing leadership as a social process where followers are encouraged by the leaders to use their strengths and resource towards collective goals. Bua and Ivagher (2014) stressed further that leadership in any organization concerns that part of management that deals with employees' direct supervision. Bua and Ivagher opine that leadership is one of the most important factors in achieving higher performance in educational institutions.

Ekpiken (2016) maintained that the success of any organization depends largely on sound leadership. Ekpiken added that the leader executes policies and decisions that can help direct an organisation's activities. The author stressed that the greatest mistake of any administrator is to do everything by themselves instead of getting things done through people. Thus, the central theme of leadership is getting things done through people. It is an input into an organization that includes structures and acts that encourages group interaction which aimed at productivity and individual fulfillment. In another vein, Amadi (2016) defined leadership as internal personal influence exercised through communication and directed toward achieving group goals. Leadership is thus the accomplishment of a goal through the direction of human assistance. According to Amadi, the person who successfully marshals human collaborators to achieve a particular end is a leader. Monsur (2018) maintains that leadership makes a difference in the quality of schooling, school development, and student learning.

Leadership in education refers to enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of; teaching, non-teaching, students, and even parents toward achieving common educational goals. The major aim of educational leadership is to ensure academic success achievable through improved materials and training with collaboration with different education stakeholders.

Collaborative leadership is about fostering the growth of different stakeholders in the school community. It refers to the growth of leaders, going deeper in learning and with relationships. According to Hauge (2015), collaborative leadership is a democratic and participative leadership where influence shifts from the top of the organizational hierarchy towards the work teams and teachers themselves. It goes beyond the work of the leader but also encompasses the assumption of shared and distributed leadership embedded in situated practices. Collaborative leadership identifies the human interactional sense-making process in a real-life setting when leadership is confronted with a merger and the resulting complexity in the surrounding and within the organization. Collaboration involves working with someone else to create or produce something. Hauge stressed that collaborative leadership entails using governance structure and organizational processes that employ staff, students, and encouraged broad participation of the educational stakeholders to improve quality learning outcomes. Collaborative leadership in an organization begins with a leader having a clear vision and a drive to succeed and then empowering and encouraging others to collaborate. Collaborative leadership is built upon trust, honesty, integrity, fairness, and open communication. Some leaders believe that, once individuals or groups are gathered, a plan can easily be made, and commitment can be obtained. If there is no collaboration, the best ideas and generation of new knowledge cannot be achieved.

Sanaghan(2015) opines that collaboration occurs when people work with others from a different external organization. (For example, local community vendors, another campus,

businesses) or within their institution, across decisions that can potentially impact them especially resource allocation decisions. Collaborative leadership style in higher institutions can therefore be said to entail a leadership that carries everyone along. All the segments of the university communities from academic, non-academic and external university communities are involved one way or the other in the management of the universities. It is the presence of opportunities for shared leadership, ownership, and sharing of instructional and pedagogical ideas. Sanaghan and Lohndorf (2015) believe that real collaboration practices are vital for dealing with higher education's various challenges. A collective and coherent approach is needed if the universities must strive in the future.

Harper (2018) added that collaboration strives in an environment where the leaders are friendly. However, a university environment that treats lecturers as lone individuals may leave lecturers reluctant to open up, trust, and vulnerable enough to speak or provide support. Collaboration will be seen as signs of weakness, incompetence, or inefficiency in such a university environment. Thus, the Vice Chancellors need to create ways for academic, non-academic, and the entire university communities to become connected educators who will ensure quality in all aspects of education in the university.

The concept of quality originates from the Latin word "galitas, "which means "what kind."Haruna (2019) defines quality as the appropriateness of resources available in education and measured on a scale of preference. Thus, it expresses the standard of the means through which a certain standard in education can be achieved.

Henry in Makuku (2020) defined quality as doing right when no one is watching. Makuku maintains that quality is the transformation of everything we do to remain relevant. Universities are established to achieve certain goals, and the quality of its services must add value to the lives of all that passed through them. Makuku (2015) iterated that higher institutions must maintain a culture of quality for goal attainment.

Matei & Julia (2016) stressed that quality assurance in higher institutions is systematic internal and external management procedures and mechanisms a higher education institution uses to assure its stakeholders of the quality of its system's processes, products, and outcomes. It also covers its ability to manage the maintenance and enhancement of quality. Matei & Julia posited that quality assurance implies a determination to develop a quality culture in an institution of higher education so that everyone is aware of their part in sustaining and improving the institution's quality.

Quality occurs through the interaction between the government, management, academic, non-academic, students, and the community engagement or service. School community engagement is a driving force behind quality assurance practice. Okolo (2015) believes that community engagement goal is the quality of school management learning environment, curriculum delivery and student's learning outcomes through the community's involvement. Okolo posited that this synergy is a building block for attaining the school's goals and producing quality output that will satisfy society.

Okolo stressed further that school and community engagement has dual purposes. First, the school and the communities share common goals, values, aspirations, responsibilities, mutual respect, understanding, and working together. Second, this relationship enables the communities to assist the schools with cash and material resources and enabling environment and also aid in building teachers' capacities. And the school, on the other hand, renders useful service to the community.

In another vein, Makuku (2020) sees community engagement as the collaboration among higher education institutions and their larger communities in order to enjoy sharing of knowledge and other resources in partnership and reciprocity. The increasing level of community involvement impacts trust, sense of belonging, and communication flow between the universities and the communities.

Meaningful community engagement extends beyond physical involvement to include ideas, contribution to decision making and sharing of responsibility, health promotion, research, or policymaking. Makuku (2020) maintained that to achieve successful collaboration with a community, all parties involved need to understand insiders' point of view, whether they are members of a neighbourhood, religious institutions, health practice, or public agencies. Community engagement is grounded in the principle of community organization, fairness, justice, empowerment, participation, and self-determination. This may go a long way to the attainment of quality assurance in universities. Quality is mainly a result of the interaction between the academic, non-academic, management, students, and others in the learning environment, and this may be achieved through collaborative leadership. But how can collaborative leadership impact quality in teaching, staff development, and community engagement?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The fundamental goal for establishing university is to achieve academic excellence and to advance Nigeria's economic growth through the provision of high quality education. This can be achieved through collaborative leadership, quality in teaching and learning, staff development, and community engagement. In recent years, Vice Chancellors of universities in Kogi State have used different leadership styles ranging from democratic to pseudo-democratic, coercive, transactional, and transformative. But they seem not to achieve much nor enjoy full cooperation from the university staff and the communities. The cordial relationship that is necessary for healthy work place seems inadequate in the universities. The synergy that is supposed to exist between the universities and the communities is not sufficient. Some measures need to be put in place to find out how the management of universities can carry every one along to enhance the achievement of the goals of the university. Therefore, this study was carried out to bring to limelight the need

to adopt a more collaborative leadership style and bring out how it will impact the quality of staff development, teaching and learning, and community engagement in the universities in Kogi State.

Purpose of the study

The study's main purpose is to find out the impact of collaborative leadership on quality assurance for goal attainment of universities in Kogi State. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Find out the influence of collaborative leadership on staff development for quality assurance and goal attainment.
2. Investigate how collaborative leadership enhances quality assurance in teaching and learning for goal attainment.
3. Identify ways in which collaborative leadership encourages community engagement for quality assurance and goal attainment.

Research Questions.

The following research questions guided the study

1. What is the influence of collaborative leadership on the quality of staff development for goal attainment in universities?
2. How does collaborative leadership enhances quality in teaching and learning for goal attainment in universities?
3. How can collaborative leadership encourage community engagement for quality assurance and goal attainment in universities?

Hypothesis

H1: There is no significant difference in the mean response of academic and management staff on the ways collaborative leadership influence quality assurance for goal attainment of universities in Kogi state.

METHODS

The method applied for this study was a descriptive cross-sectional survey design. This design allowed the respondents to give their opinion on the impacts of collaborative leadership on quality assurance in staff development, teaching and learning, and community engagement for goal attainment of public universities in Kogi States. The population for the study was the three universities in Kogi State. The three universities were used because these are the only universities in Kogi State. Proportionate stratified random sampling was used to draw 30% of the academic and management staff from the three universities, respectively. This technique ensures a proportionate representation of the population and guarantees representation of the population of minority constituents of the population. A structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Impact of collaborative leadership on quality assurance for goal attainment in universities in Kogi State"(ICLQAGAUQ) was used. The questionnaire was based on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). The scale was weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively. The method of administration was face-to-face. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Foundations and one from Science Education of the Federal University Lokoja. Twenty copies of the instrument were trial tested on the Open University Lokoja study centre facilitators and management staff. Cronbach Alpha method was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability obtained is 0.84. Mean and the standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, while t-test statistic for Independent sample was used to test the hypotheses. The decision rule was based on the real limit of number. Mean scores of 3.50 – 4.00 were accepted as Strongly Agree, 2.50 – 3.49 as Agree, while 1.50 – 2.49 and 0.05 – 1.49 were accepted as disagree

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the influences of collaborative leadership on the quality assurance of staff development for goal attainment of universities?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the responses of the respondents on the influence of a collaborative leader on the quality of staff development for goal attainment.

S/N	Questionnaire items Deviation	Mean	Standard	Decision
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1	Facilitate orientation for new staff. Sponsor staff to attend Conferences.	3.57	0.80	SA
2	Organize workshops for Staff.	3.62	0.95	A
3	Promote team learning and collaboration among staff	3.45	0.85	SA
4	Create and support continuous learning opportunities for all staff.	3.55	0.75	SA
5	Empowering staff and encouraging participation.	3.69	0.88	SA
6		3.75	0.92	SA
Cluster mean				3.59

Results in Table 1 shows that all the items (1-6) are ways in which collaborative leadership influences staff development. The cluster mean of 3.92 shows that the respondents strongly agreed with 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, while the mean for item 4 is 3.45, which falls short of strongly agreed.

Research Question 2: How can collaborative leadership enhance quality in teaching and learning for goal attainment of universities?

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviation of the ways in which collaborative leadership enhance quality in teaching and learning for goal attainment in universities.

S/N	Questionnaire items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Collaborative leadership encourages sharing of ideas between staff.	3.61	0.68	SA
2	Collaboration leads to creation of new and better strategies for solving problems.	3.83	0.65	SA
3	Enhances shared accountability for student learning.	3.70	0.73	SA

4	Encourages improvement in outcome for students.	3.92	0.79	SA
5	Enhances retention of staff because the staff will feel more valued.	3.83	0.82	SA
6	Increase in student achievement.	3.81	0.86	SA
	Cluster mean	3.78	0.75	SA

Data present in Table 2 shows that all the items had their mean ranging from 3.61 – 3.83. This indicates that the respondents strongly agreed that items 8-13 are ways in which collaborative leadership enhances quality assurance in teaching and learning in universities in for goal attainment.

Research question 3: In what ways can collaborative leadership encourage community engagement for quality assurance and goal attainment in universities?

Table 3: Ways in which collaborative leadership encourages community engagement for quality assurance and goal attainment in universities?

S/N	Questionnaire items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Through generation of ideas and exchange of knowledge	3.75	0.45	SA
2	Contribution to decision making, thereby creating a sense of belonging	3.60	0.47	SA
3	Through transparency and the trust, which is at 3.55 the heart of collaborative practices.		0.68	SA
4	Linking teaching and learning as well as research towards solving political and social needs of the community.	4.50	0.66	SA

5	Organizing learning activities inform of public enlightenment and sensitization by educators in a different discipline.	3.65	0.71	SA
		3.73	0.68	SA
6	Create awareness about the culture, economic conditions norms and values of the community to enhance peaceful co-existence			
		3.52	0.61	SA
7	Sharing of good practices both within and outside the universities.			
	Cluster mean	3.78	0.75	SA

Table 3 shows the mean score of respondents on items 14-22. The mean score is above 3.5. This falls within the real limit of numbers of strongly agree. This shows that the respondents strongly agreed that these items are ways in which collaborative leadership encourage community engagement.

Hypothesis 1.

There is no significant difference in the mean response of academic and management staff on the ways collaborative leadership influence quality assurance for goal attainment of universities.

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis of management staff and academic staff on the ways collaborative leadership influences quality assurance for goal attainment in universities.

N	Mean <i>x</i>	SD	DF	<i>t</i> calculated	<i>t</i> critical	Sig (<i>p</i>)	Decision
Academic staff 300	3.85	0.88		0.69	1.96	0,05	Accept
Management staff	3.83	0.90	398				

The results in Table 4 $t(398) = 0.69$; $p > 0.05$, show no significant difference in the mean responses of academic staff and management on the ways collaborative leadership influences the quality assurance for goal assurance in universities in Kogi State. Therefore, the t-calculated is 0.69 at 398 degree of freedom and 0.05 levels of significance. Since the calculated value of 0.69 is less than the table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis is of no significance as postulated.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

The findings revealed that collaborative leadership influences staff development by encouraging on-the-job training, orientation for new staff and sponsoring staff to attend seminars. It also influences the organization of workshops for staff, promotion of team learning and collaboration among the staff, empowering staff and encouraging staff participation.

This finding is in line with Haruna (2019), who found that education and awareness through workshops, staff development and capacity development will lead to the development of quality culture in universities. The findings also show that the quality of teaching and learning can be improved by encouraging sharing of ideas between staff, creating new and better strategies for solving problems, accountability for student learning, improvement in a learning outcome, and enhancing staff retention. This finding aligns with Doyle (2020), who opined that collaboration enables people to work towards a common goal with others successfully. In addition, it enhances quality in communication, active listening to others, taking responsibility, and respecting the diversity of others.

Monsur (2017) observed earlier that collaborative leadership builds a culture of interaction that enables teachers to talk about their problems, acknowledge the constraints being faced by them, and work together to improve students' performance, leading to a more positive approach to teaching and learning. The study also revealed that the respondents strongly agreed that collaborative leaders encourage community engagement. This can be achieved by generating ideas and exchanging knowledge and resources between the

universities and the community, contributing to decision-making, thereby creating a sense of belonging and transparency. It can also be achieved through a trust which is at the heart of collaborative practices, linking teaching and learning and research towards solving political and social problems of the community to enhance peaceful co-existence.

This is in line with Okolo (2015), who stressed that schools and communities share common goals, values and aspirations, responsibilities, mutual understanding, and ways of working together. Makuku (2020) stressed that the relationship between the university and the community is partnership and reciprocity. Community involvement impact trust, sense of belonging and community flow between the universities and the communities. Community engagement in research and teaching and learning bridges the gap between research and action. Universities cannot exist in isolation from the community without maintaining a synergy because the universities exist to serve the community in one way or the other. Students go to the community to use facilities like banks and industries on excursions, transactions, or industrial attachment or internship. And even gain employment in the immediate or extended community after graduation from the universities.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that collaborative leadership positively impacts staff development, teaching and learning and community engagement. Staff development brings about human capacity building in the universities. This will enhance quality teaching and learning because the staffs were exposed to better skills and methods of teaching. And community development creates a friendly environment between the universities, the immediate and outside environment, thereby creating a synergy between them. Therefore, quality assurance in these aspects is necessary for the goal achievement of the universities in Kogi state.

Recommendations.

The following are recommendations made based on the findings of this study.

1. Universities in Kogi State should vigorously adopt collaborative leadership to bring about quality assurance in staff development.
2. Collaborative leadership should be encouraged in universities in Kogi state by devising means to achieve quality teaching and learning.
3. Universities in Kogi State should link teaching, learning, and research activities with community engagement to contribute quality service to the community. And this will enhance peaceful co-existence between the community and the university.

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