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Administrative Effectiveness in University System: The Trajectory of Students' Involvement in Governance

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Abstract

Much vacuum has been identified in the trajectory of university governance, which had led to epileptic university operation as a result of student and university management dichotomies in Nigeria. To this end, this study investigated students' involvement in university governance and administrative effectiveness in public and private universities in Ekiti state. The study adopted survey design. The population consists of all staff and students of all universities in Ekiti State. The sample consisted of 500 respondents selected using proportionate sampling technique. A questionnaire titled, "Students Involvement in University Governance and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire" (SIUGAEQ) was used to collect data. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and Inferential Statistics such as Frequency Counts, Percentages, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), and T-test. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that the level of students' involvement in university governance and administrative effectiveness was high which indicate that there is a high level of students' involvement in university governance and administrative effectiveness in public and private universities. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between students' involvement in University governance and administrative effectiveness. Findings also showed that there was no significant difference in the level of students' involvement in University governance in public and private universities as well as in the level of administrative effectiveness in public and private Universities. The study recommended that students should be actively involved in university decision making process. This will accord them a sense of belonging, reduce incessant conflicts between the university management and the students which will, in turn, lead to improved administrative effectiveness of the university system.

Key words: Students' involvement, University governance, Administrative effectiveness, University system.

Introduction

Education, in all its three domains (cognitive, affective and psychomotor), and types (formal, semi-formal and informal), has been seen and subsequently confirmed to be a veritable, virile and prolific tool in attaining and achieving personal and national development, social re-construction and social re-engineering, administrative proficiency and increased human productivity. In a similar view, Clinton (2012) posited that achieving the objective of global development will demand accelerated efforts to achieve educational goals, otherwise, peace and

prosperity will have its glass ceiling. The contribution of education to all-round development seems to be endless. This perhaps has inspired and compelled nations of the world to adopt education as a working tool for the attainment of their goals and vision. In light of the preceding, Almond (2007) asserted that education is a means through which man acquires the civilisation of the past, enabled to take part in the civilisation of the present and make provision for the civilisation of the future. Osakinle (2007) in a similar view, noted that education is the process of developing the individual physically, mentally, spiritually, morally and socially for his welfare and that of the society. This is also supported by Omodan (2019) that education all over the world is panacea for social and national development. In the development of any nation and its people, university education can never be underrated. That is why Omodan, Tsotetsi & Dube (2018) in their exploration concluded that university education is the power behind both economic and social devolvement of every nation.

University education over the ages has been at the vanguard of quality researches, discoveries and inventions, which have in no small measure contributed to human capital development, technology, science, information and communication technology, automobiles, etc. In a similar view, Musa, Rech & Musova (2019) while supporting the aforementioned opined that corporate governance practices became undoubtedly very important not only in terms of financial decision making but also corporate performance, social responsibility, the economy as a whole, corporate management's areas and many others. This explains the reasons why many nations across the globe devote a substantial sum of money and effort to research and develop their universities. Nigeria, therefore, is not an exemption. University education, however, calls for a serious, focused and committed administrative system which will fashion it towards the attainment of its overall goals and objectives of producing intellectuals in various fields and disciplines who are worthy in both learning and character. The kind of administrative system needed to manage university education is one that should be all-inclusive, effective, efficient, corporative and participatory where all stakeholders are recognised and respected when it comes to administration and governance of the system.

One veritable and established way of assessing the performance of any administration, be it profit-making and non-profit-making, in my view and experiences is how best it can carry out its functions efficiently and effectively in other to achieve its predetermined goals and objectives.

Richard & et al. (2009) validated this assertion that administrative effectiveness captures administrative performance outcomes, customarily associated with more efficient or effective operations and other external measures that relate to considerations that are broader than those simply associated with economic valuation (either by shareholders, managers, or customers), such as corporate social responsibility. In case of university administration, the modes of operation should be such that will bring about the achievement of the intended goals within the stipulated time frame. From the above, I believe that administrative effectiveness could be viewed as "outcome accountability" or the extent to which an administration achieves specified level of progress compared with its objectives. To support the above argument, Akinyeye (2016) posited that university effectiveness is measured by how best it can produce an intellectual base for a nation. In other words, the university is a breeding ground for intellectuals, and its effectiveness could be measured by such.

According to Musa, Musova and Debnarova (2017), the word governance was derived from a Latin word called "kyberman" which means to control or direct. This could mean, governance is an act of management that represents the entire functions of a constituted body of individuals who are saddled with the responsibility of managing both human and non-human resources of any organisation. This is corroborated by Natufe (2006) that governance could be measured by transparency, accountability, all-inclusiveness, responsibly, responsiveness, probity, equality, equity, and its attractions. This in my argument, represents what a constituted body does and can be applied to any administrative formation. Therefore, students' governance is a strand of governance, especially when it is recognised, integrated and enshrined in the overall body of university government. The students' body which is at the central point in both the planning and outcome of university's activities, constitutes a significant force in governance at the university level. So, there is a nexus between students' involvement in university governance and the entire governance. From the above literature, it could be established that administrative effectiveness could be measured by its ability to achieve its predetermined objectives within a stipulated period. In the case of a university, its effectiveness is measured by its ability to bring about both overt and covert changes in individuals in all the three domains of education (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor). In order for any administration especially a university to achieve its objectives, it must be ready to integrate all the stakeholders within the purview of the university environment into the mainstream of government. Based on this, it becomes expedient that student population

should be adequately integrated into governance, thereby ensuring students' involvement, which in turn would guarantee administrative effectiveness. This is not far from the findings of Omodan, Tsotetsi Dube (2018) that collaborative governance is a pointer to crisis-free university operation.

Hence, good governance in all sectors has been a global outcry. In the case of university governance in Nigeria, there is an interplay between different elements; which are internal or external. The internal elements which is the primary concern for this study includes students, academic staffs, non-academic staffs, technological and laboratory staffs which constitute themselves into groups like Students' Union Government (SUG), Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Non Academic Staff Union (NASU), Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities(SSANU), National Association of Academic Technologist (NAAT)etc. Each of these groups has its input and demands in the running of universities. Perhaps, this calls for an appropriate and astute system of governance in order to attain the objectives of universities.

Involvement of students as one of the critical stakeholders could be seen as one of the critical factors that could contribute to effective university governance. This is because the students constitute the largest proportion of the university population and are at the receiving end of university policies and actions. However, in Nigeria, one obvious factor that has constituted a clog in the wheel of smooth university governance is improper management of students' affairs. Aluebe (2001), posited that history shows a disproportional representation of students in university administration in Nigeria as a whole. The various students' uprisings like the University of Ibadan students' riot of 1971, University of Benin students' demonstration of 1976, Ali must go crisis of 17th April 1978. Recently the Lagos State University riot of January 2014 which escalated till June 2014 and later got refreshed in March 16th 2015 was as a result of the face-off between the school's administration and students over the payment of school fees (Guardian, 2015).

The case of Ladoke Akintola University Ogbomoso comes to mind in the recent time, the students' various intervention moves were met with brick-walls when school fee is hiked up to 300% without previous consultation and deliberation with the students who will bear the brunt. The crisis led to students protest with resultant closure of the institution (Punch, 2018). If the students were carried along in the process of fee increment, they would have made their plights known to the committee responsible for making of such recommendation for the increase in school fees. Therefore, the perceived lack of students' involvement in the various university decision-making committees invariably stands as an impediment in the wheel of their progress. The eventual

of this is an avoidable issue that should have warranted a common stand but eventually slide into crisis, by so doing headed for school closure.

This trajectory is not limited only to public universities as the society portrayed the students' activism; it has also spread to private universities and have impacted negatively on its governance as well. Most recently, students' agitation seems to have caught up with students in private institutions of learning (universities). Students' activism in private universities also have it own history, in march 19th, 2014 students of Bowen University, Iwo, Osun state protested the abrupt and deliberate disruption of a football match that was being watched by the students, when the university authority was alleged to have caught off power supply to the common room. This action, to students, depicts that the students were not carried along in the area of students' support committee which invariably caused a breakdown in students support services, as reported by Oyewale (2014). This alleged action caused a row among the students, which then triggered a riot. The action was seen by students as non-students' welfare-oriented, which could be confirmed as lack of students' involvement in decisionmaking process in the university. The May 14th, 2014 students' protest at Caleb University, Lagos is another issue. It was reported by Daniel (2014) that a student who intended praying within the university campus was stopped by a school official, this later prompted the mobilisation of students to protest the "anti-freedom of worship" university rule. This action led to the destruction of some school property which eventually led to the closure of the university for two weeks.

There are series of other practical examples which can be cited as hypothetical in this regard. Going by history, Aluede & Aluede (1999) explained that the University of Ibadan crisis of 1971 which led to the death of the students' union president, of blessed memory, Kunle Adepeju by the men of the Nigerian Police through indiscriminate shooting of life bullet. This eventually led to the closure of the university for months. This also has a negative implication on educational development, which invariably meant wastage of resources. Giving credence to this, Ayodele (2005) opined that wastage implies inefficiency in the system. In Ekiti State, the universities have witnessed series of breakdown in university administration due to restiveness among students. Most times, this has been linked to policies which were often perceived by the students as obnoxious, non-inclusive and selfish. For instance, I am an eye witness to an incidence that happened in 1st May 2013, the Ekiti State University students (EKSU) went on a rampage to protest the policy of the university administration which enforced a "no school fees, no lecture rule." This

triggered uproar from the students and eventually led to the closure of the school for more than a month. The aftermath of which is still being felt by the school until today.

From the above exploration and observations, high level of disruptions in public universities in terms of students' unrest/protest, as well as industrial action embarked upon by the various groups of staffs of the universities in Nigeria is second to none which appears to be responsible for systemic instability within the university system. Universities' academic calendars are often amended to favour the prevailing circumstances. However, the case is different in most private universities where the academic calendar in most times unaltered. A perfect case of the above happened in 2013 in Ekiti State University during the 2012/2013 academic session, a new set of newly admitted students were merged with the previously existing 100 and 200 level students (www.eksu.edu.ng). This was due to the effect and aftermath of earlier disruptions in academic programs during the session by the students for the "no school fee no examination rule" implemented at that point in time.

These and much more have created a lacuna to be filled up in the regular operation of universities in Nigeria in other to meet up with world educational standard. Because, if this is not addressed, it may spell doom for the growth and development of the education system and the nation at large. This may also has serious implication on parents and guardians, since additional expenses are incurred on children/wards up-keep, feeding, and accommodation because much frustration is infused into the students in the process which do result in negative attitudinal disposition to learning. The students are kept static by so doing, while the university resources are expended without achieving what it ought to achieve in the stipulated time. People who will be affected by a major decision have the right to be heard. Students may refuse to support those decisions to which they are not a party to, and in an attempt to enforce such decision by the management, it may result in crisis thereby disrupting academic calendar. Based on the above-stated problems, the study investigated influence of students' involvement in university governance on administrative effectiveness in all the universities.

The objective of the Study

It is against these missing gap that the study investigated students' involvement in university governance and administrative effectiveness in Ekiti state. Not only that, the study also attempted to understand the level of differences in students' involvement in university governance and administrative effectiveness between public and private universities selected in Ekiti State,

Nigeria. In order to achieve the objective of the study, the following research questions were raised to pilot the study;

1. What is the level of students' involvement in university governance in both public and private universities in Ekiti State?
2. What is the level of administrative effectiveness in both public and private universities in Ekiti State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

1. There is no significant relationship between students' involvement in university governance and administrative effectiveness.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of students' involvement in university governance in Public and Private Universities
3. There is no significant difference in the level of administrative effectiveness in Public and Private Universities.

Methodology

This study employed descriptive research of the survey design. Descriptive research was considered appropriate because it focuses on the observation and perception of the existing situation. Survey method was used because it provides methodological design of investigating Students' Involvement in University Governance and Administrative effectiveness. The population for this study consists of all staff and students of Ekiti State University Ado-Ekiti, Federal University Oye-Ekiti and AfeBabalola University, Ado Ekiti. Proportional stratified random sampling technique was used to select 500 respondents. The population was divided into strata based on the groups within the university, while simple random sampling technique was used to select the samples from each stratum. These sampling techniques were able to cater for sub-groups of interest within the population.

The instrument used for collecting data was a questionnaire titled "Students' Involvement in University Governance and Administrative Effectiveness Questionnaire (SIUGAEQ)". The instrument was divided into three sections, section A, B, and C. Face and content validity of the instrument was done by experts in Educational Management and Tests and Measurement to ensure that the instrument adequately measured the intended content areas. To ascertain the reliability of

the instrument, the split-half method of reliability was done, and the scores from a single test were used to estimate the consistency of the test items. The scores on odd number items and even numbers items were correlated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), and the reliability coefficient of 0.80 was obtained. The co-efficient was corrected to full-length coefficient using the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula. Research question 1 and 2 were answered using frequency counts and percentages; hypothesis 1 was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) while hypothesis 2 and 3 were tested using T-test. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research Question

Question 1*:* What is the level of students' involvement in university governance in both public and private universities?

Table 1: *Level of students' involvement in university governance in public and private universities*

Level of students' involvement in university governance	Public		Private		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Low (1 - 162.69)	211	48.8	32	50	243	48. 6
Moderate (162.70)	2	5	2	3.1	4	8
High (162.71-500)	223	51.1	30	46.9	253	50. 6
Total	436	100.0	64	100.0	500	100.0

In order to answer the question, scores on students' involvement in university governance in both public and private universities (items 1- 58 in section B of SIUGAEQ) were computed. The scores were used to categorise the responses into low, moderate, and high levels of students' involvement in university governance. Scores below the mean score (162.70) constituted low level of students' involvement in university governance, the mean score constituted the moderate level of students' involvement in university governance, while scores above the mean score constituted the high level of students' involvement in university governance. The level of students' involvement in university governance in both public and private universities are presented in table 1 and figure i.

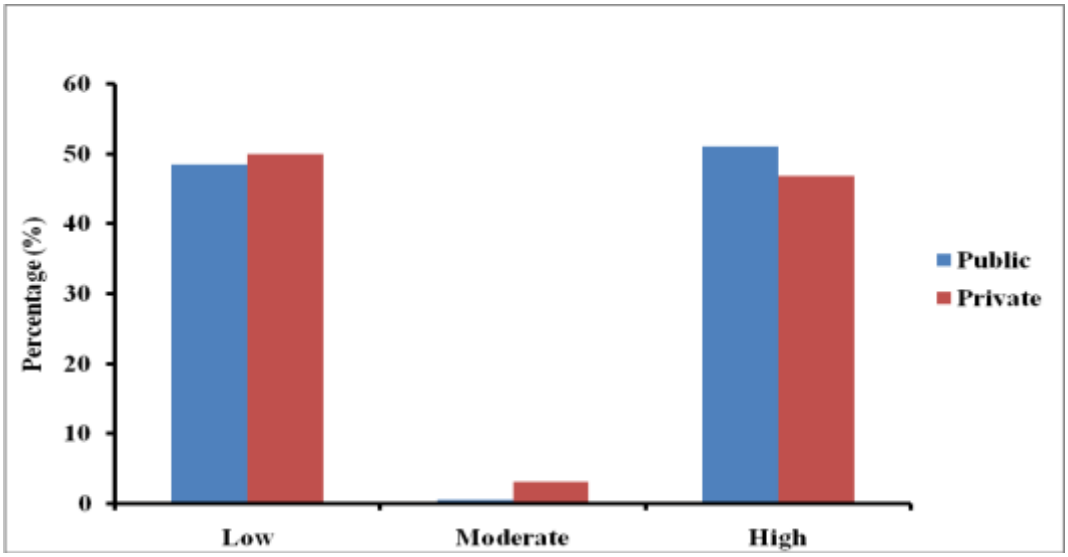

Figure i: *Level of students' involvement in university governance in public and private universities*

Table 1 and figure i show that 48.4% of the respondents in public universities had low level of students' involvement in university governance, 5% moderate while 51.1% had a high level of students' involvement in university governance. Similarly, 50% had low level of students' involvement in university governance in private university, 3.1% and 46.9% had moderate and high level of students' involvement in university governance. The combined sample indicate 48.6% low level, 0.8% moderate and 50. 6% high level of students' involvement in university governance. Therefore, the level of students' involvement in both public and private universities are high and low, respectively.

Question 2: What is the level of administrative effectiveness in both public and private universities?

In answering the question, scores on administrative effectiveness in both public and private universities (items 1 – 66 in section C of SIUGAEQ were computed. The scores were used to categorise the responses into low, moderate and high levels of administrative effectiveness. Scores below the mean score (172.29) constituted low level of administrative effectiveness, the mean score constituted the moderate level of administrative effectiveness, while scores above the mean score constituted the high level of administrative effectiveness. The result showing the level of administrative effectiveness in both public and private universities are presented in Table 2 and Figure ii.

Table 2: Level of administrative effectiveness in both public and private universities.

Level of administrative effectiveness	Public		Private		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Low (1 – 172.28)	199	45.6	27	42.2	226	45.2
Moderate (172.29)	7	1.6	1	1.6	8	1.6
High(172.30 – 500)	230	52.8	36	56.3	266	53.2
Total	436	100.0	64	100.0	500	100.0

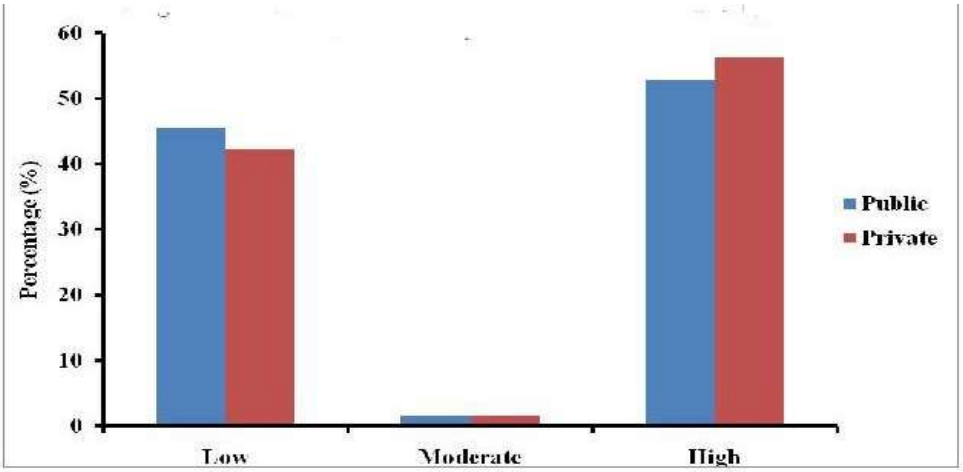

Figure ii: *Level of administrative effectiveness in public and private universities*

Table 2 and figure ii show that 45.6% of the responses in public universities had low administrative effectiveness, while 1.6% and 52.8% had a moderate and high level of administrative effectiveness, respectively. Similarly, 42.2% of the responses in private university had low level of administrative effectiveness, 1.6% had moderate level, while 56.3% had high level of administrative effectiveness. In all, 226 (45.2%) of the total sample had low level of administrative effectiveness, 8 (1.6%) is moderate, while only 266 (53.2%) had high administrative effectiveness. This implies that the level of administrative effectiveness in both public and private universities is high.

Testing of Hypotheses

The hypotheses earlier postulated in the study were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between students' involvement in university governance and administrative effectiveness.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores on students' involvement in university governance (items 1 – 58 in section B of SIUGAEQ) and administrative effectiveness (items 1–66 in section C of SIUGAEQ) were subjected to computation and subsequently subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 3

Table 3: *Pearson Product Moment of Students' involvement in university governance and administrative effectiveness*

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r_{cal}	r_{table}
Students' involvement in university governance	500	162.70	30.40		
Administrative Effectiveness	500	172.29	38.43	0.572*	0.195

***P<0.05**

Table 3 shows that r_{cal} (0.572) is greater than r_{table} (0.195) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between students' involvement in university governance and administrative effectiveness.

***Hypothesis 2*:** There is no significant difference in the level of students' involvement in university governance in public and private universities.

Scores relating to students' involvement in university governance were computed using items1– 58 in section B of SIUGAEQ. These scores were compared between public and private universities for statistical significance using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: *Students' involvement in university governance in public and private universities.*

Type of university	N	Mean	SD	Df	t_{cal}	t_{table}
Public	436	162.05	30.59			
				498	1.248*	1.960
Private	64	167.13	28.89			

***P>0.05**

Table 4 reveals that t_{cal} (1.248) is less than t_{table} (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the level of students' involvement in university governance in public and private universities.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the level of administrative effectiveness.

In testing the hypothesis, scores on level of administrative effectiveness were computed using items 1–66 in section C of SIUGAEQ. This score was computed for statistical significance involving t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The result is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: *Administrative effectiveness of public and private universities.*

Type of university	N	Mean	SD	Df	t_{cal}	t_{table}
Public	436	171.32	38.05	498	1.486*	1.960
Private	64	178.95	40. 61			

***P>0.05**

The result in Table 5 shows there is no significant difference in the level of administrative effectiveness in public and private universities (t=1.486, P>0.05). The null hypothesis is, therefore upheld.

Discussion

The study showed that the level of students' involvement in University governance in both public and private universities was moderate. This implies that students, as stakeholders in the educational sector, are moderately involved in policy formulation, decision making that affects students' welfare geared towards the attainment of set goals and objectives. The finding agrees with Omodan, Dude & Tsotetsi (2018) who posited that collaborative governance in management of students' crisis in Nigeria University is moderate and that the use of collaborative governance is actually in operation with average utilization. The finding is at variance with Luescher-Mamashela (2010) that formal participation of the students' leaders in management of university system is quite limited.

The study revealed that the level of administrative effectiveness in both public and private universities was moderate; this implies that the level of administrative effectiveness in both public and private universities is inadequate. The finding disagrees with Lueschere-Mamashela (2010)

who posited that the university being a market enterprise, the senior managers are the key governors, though their external orientation towards the market in a way makes them less effective in decision making. The findings also disagrees with Richard& et al (2009) which stated that administrative effectiveness captures administrative performance outcomes, normally associated with more efficient or effective operations and other external measures that relate to considerations that are broader than those simply associated with economic valuation (either by shareholders, managers, or customers), such as corporate social responsibility.

The study showed that there was a significant relationship between students' involvement in university governance and administrative effectiveness. In other words, administrative effectiveness in the universities is enhanced when students are given a place in the decision-making process. The finding agrees with Ikenwe (1988) that committee system in institutional governance promotes democratisation of administrative process thereby encouraging individual and collective participation. The finding is in disagreement with those of Oke et al. (2010), who assert that the major problem confronting our universities is the alienation of the students from decision-making.

The finding of the study also revealed that there was no significant difference in the level of students' involvement in university governance of both public and private universities. The level of students' participation in university governance in private universities seems to be higher than that of the public universities as revealed in their mean scores on students' involvement in university governance. The finding, however negates the assertion of Ezekwem (2009) that the establishment of students' participation in public universities is as far back as 1957 in which students play active role in their affair, and this constitutes an integral part of the overall university system.

The study showed that there was no significant difference in the level of administrative effectiveness in both public and private universities. The result showed that private Universities had higher mean than public Universities administrative effectiveness, but the mean difference was not statistically significant at 0.05 level. The finding agrees with Ezekwen (2009) who reported that the level of organizational effectiveness in private Universities is perceived to be high when compared with public Universities. This could be that there are a strict monitoring and effective delivery due to its nature of its sole-proprietorship, elongation of work hour and prohibition of staff unionism through Universities governing rules, regulations, and policies.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Sequel to the findings of the study, the following conclusions were made; students in public and private universities relatively participated in university governance in Ekiti State and that students' involvement in the various committees saddled with the task of university governance was critical in determining the administrative effectiveness of public and private Universities in Ekiti State. Adequate involvement of students in University governance will greatly enhance the speedy accomplishment of the overall objective of the university. By extension, the university academic calendar will run and end at the stipulated time. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made;

1. Students should be more actively involved in the University decision-making processes. This will accord them a sense of belonging, reduce incessant conflicts between the University management and the students and in turn lead to improved administrative effectiveness of the University system.
2. Students should constitute an integral part of the university committees thereby preventing excessive elongation of the academic calendar and enhancing attainment of set goals and objectives.
3. Students should form part of students' welfare committee so that cogent areas of needs can be identified, appropriate channelisation of resources towards enhanced students' welfare and attainment of overall administrative effectiveness in the universities.
4. Involvement of students in students' disciplinary committee will help to promote peace and stability of academic programs, hence enhancing administrative effectiveness in the University system.

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